

Rooting out
the regime
in Romania

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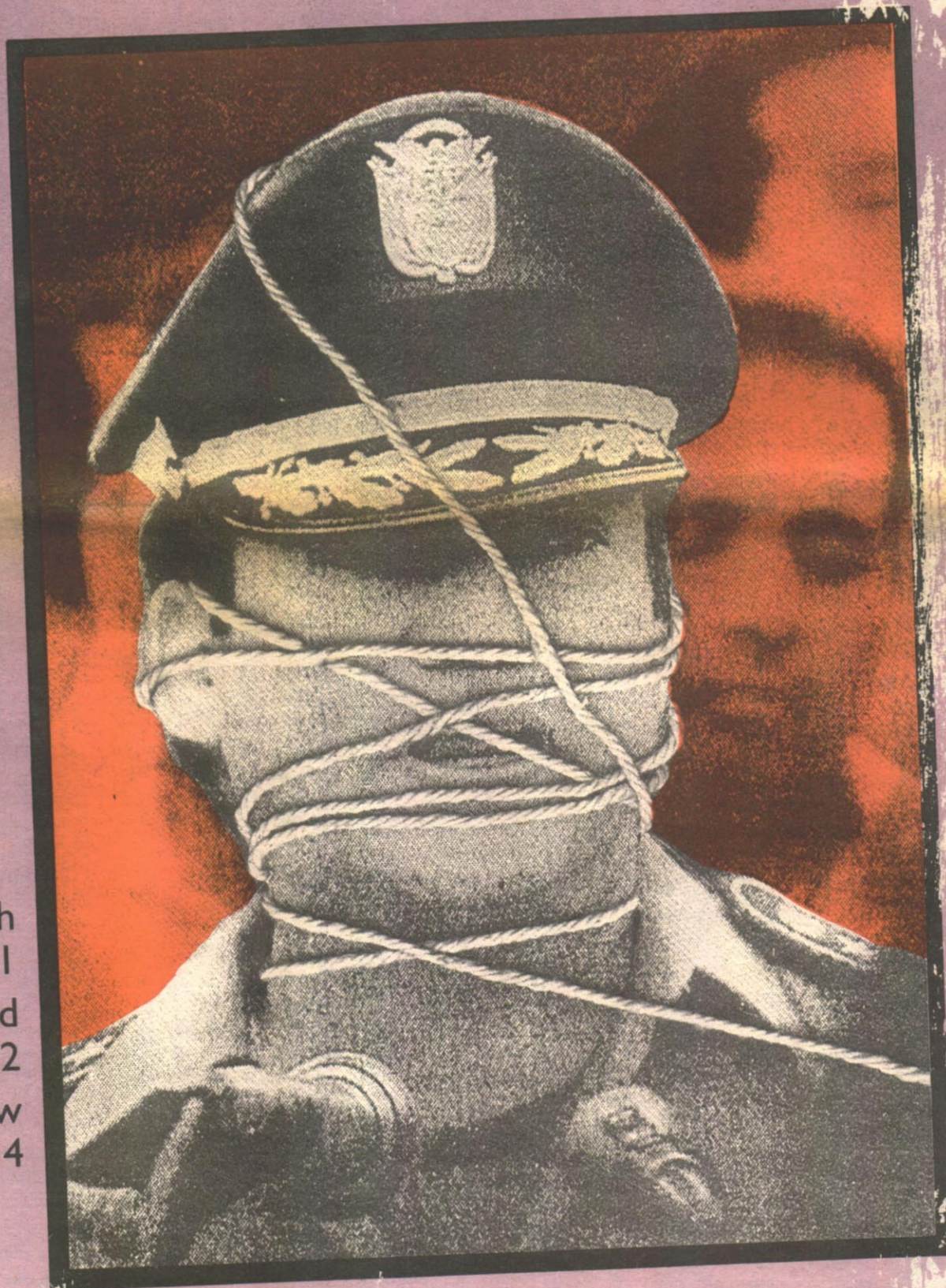
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PANAMA: TRUTH AND CONSEQUENCES

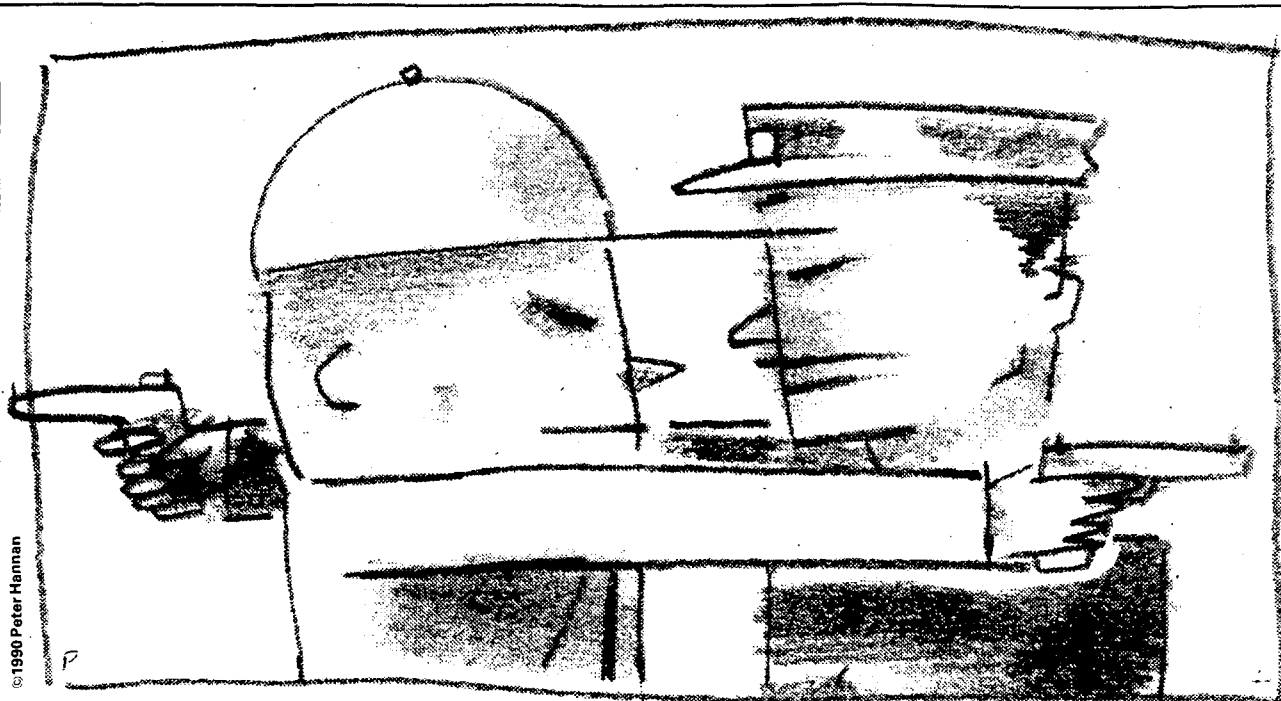


Collage by Peter Hannan

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Drug warriors march to different drums

By Ken Dermota

BOGOTA, COLOMBIA

Dozens of wars are being fought simultaneously in Colombia. Four guerrilla groups are fighting the army on several fronts. The government is fighting the drug lords. The U.S. is interdicting drugs, and 137 known right-wing paramilitary groups are killing leftists, human-rights-activists, homosexuals, liberals and unionized banana pickers on the plantations.

The overwhelming number of wars is tempting the U.S. into conflicts unrelated to drug trafficking—including ones that in fact favor the drug traffickers. Even when the U.S. fights drugs, it is not enlisted in the same drug war as Colombia.

The U.S. approaches foreign policy as a child with a hammer who considers every object a nail. No matter which tactics the drug lords use to ravage Colombia or how drug use multiplies in the U.S., U.S. officials respond as they always have, with a militarist, anti-communist "plan of action" designed to make the president look decisive and powerful while promoting U.S. interests.

Colombia sees its problem differently. It is attempting to stop the wave of violence caused by the drug lords and their death squads while putting drug interdiction on the back burner. At stake is the safety of Colombia's citizens, the survival of its officials and the possibility of holding presidential elections in April.

The U.S. is not supporting Colombia in these battles, however. Instead the U.S. has confined its efforts to inter-

dicting drugs headed for the U.S. and fighting communists, which actually helps the drug traffickers and raises the level of violence in the country.

Doing our part: In two important ways the U.S. is responsible for Colombia's current crisis. Obviously, the lion's share of the *narcotraficante's* drug money comes from customers in the U.S. The drug dealers are fighting over these billions of narcodollars that pay for the bombs and the hired guns. Second, it was the U.S. that pushed Colombia to agree to extradite drug traffickers to the U.S., and the narcos banded together to fight the policy. Since they declared "total war" on the Colombian government in April, the "extraditables" have been responsible for 230 bombings in Bogotá, the killings of a justice minister, 26 journalists, 46 judges and 110 people who died in an airline bombing.

Most recently the Administrative Security Department (DAS), the only law-enforcement agency that was making headway against the narcos, was bombed as the Colombian legislature was considering an extradition bill. "This will continue until the congress understands that the people must be our judges," an anonymous caller warned after the bombing.

Although this war is largely a U.S. creation, U.S. officials have done little to back up Colombia. The U.S. could, for instance, redirect its interdiction efforts toward the Medellín cartel, which is the base of operations for the extraditables. However, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency in Colombia has not veered from its strategy of interdicting shipments of all of Colombia's cartels, including those from Cali and the Atlantic coast, which have not been implicated in the recent spate of gruesome crimes.

"We don't discriminate," said one U.S. Embassy official in Bogotá who requested anonymity.

This is where the U.S. and Colombian strategies diverge. The Colombian government's policy has been to capture the two extraditables of the Medellín cartel who are responsible for what the head of DAS calls "the nefarious wedding of the death squads and the *narcotraficantes*." The Colombians assume that as long as none of their lieutenants wants to keep up the very costly maintenance of the death squads, the capture of these two would stop the violence. This opinion was at least partially confirmed when last month's killing of *capo* José Gonzalo Rodríguez Gacha from a Colombian police helicopter was followed not by vengeance but a letter from his family promising just the opposite.

The U.S. has done little to assist in the elimination of the extraditables. Both sides agree this would not affect the drug trafficking since the *capos* have any number of lieutenants waiting to take over the business.

The right fight? President Bush said his gift of \$65 million in helicopters, airplanes, flak jackets and rifles was to help Colombia do battle with the drug dealers. Such an arsenal, however, appeared better suited to fighting guerrillas than to protecting government officials who had asked for metal and bomb detectors. Those suspicions were confirmed by Colombia's weekly news

magazine *Samana*, which reported that the army had already used the goods on a few dozen guerrillas.

Although the U.S. arms were earmarked for the drug war, the fact that they were given to the Colombian army virtually assured that they would be used against communist guerrillas instead. "Leftists are the natural enemy of the army," columnist Maria Jimena Duzán wrote in the Colombian daily *El Espectador*. Duzán added, "Since the U.S. forced Colombia into involving the army in the drug war, [the militarization of the region] became the most destabilizing problem we have."

Large parts of the army have in fact joined the narcos. Because the drug lords have so much money, the narcos can easily offer enlisted men bribes that amount to several times their salaries to denounce impending anti-drug operations. More serious, however, are the links between Colombian army officers and the ultra-right Salvadoran-style death squads originally set up by plantation owners to keep guerrillas off their farms. Many of the men were poorly trained and armed until drug traffickers gave them an overhaul, replacing their aging shotguns with Uzi machine guns. They also enlisted some of the best trainers in the world, including Israeli mercenary Yair Klein, whose presence in Colombia created a scandal last fall.

The death squads have done the drug lords' work ever since. They have protected the narcos' huge tracts of land from guerrillas who demand "war taxes" to fund their cause. They have massacred trade-union supporters and 850 members of the left-of-center Patriotic Union Party, as well as other so-called "communists," including gays, human-rights activists and 20 students and faculty members at the University of Antioquia.

The drug lords are fighting "communists" in Colombia, and Uncle Sam is helping them out. A senior U.S. Embassy official in Bogotá, referring to the \$65 million in U.S. aid.

INSIDE STORY

said, "If this equipment is used against guerrillas—within human rights and the law—that doesn't bother us."

It is typical of the U.S. to fight Third World guerrillas in the name of a lopsided democracy like the one in Colombia. It is also typical that the *gringos* do nothing to promote democracy. Presidential elections are coming up in April, but unless the U.S. and Colombia start fighting the same war, they might never take place. "If the drug dealers succeed in killing one or two more candidates, elections will be impossible," said Enrique Santos Calderón, editor of Bogotá's *El Tiempo* newspaper.

Good neighbors: Colombians acknowledge that the survival of their country depends also on how U.S. citizens behave at home. Pointing to drug czar William Bennett's plan to cut U.S. drug consumption by 50 percent over the next 10 years, Santos asked, "Does that mean we will lose only 50 percent as many judges, 50 percent of the journalists and 50 percent of the political candidates?"

Things are not likely to improve. The Bennett plan clearly earmarks 30 percent of its money for prevention and 70 percent for enforcement. And now even the U.S. Navy, which previously refused involvement in anti-drug operations, is stationed off the coast of Colombia.

Still, the U.S. does not have a long-term strategy in the drug war. Although U.S. policymakers talk about cocaine abuse as a 20-year problem, the U.S. has not put forth a 20-year plan. "We have a three-year plan," said one U.S. Embassy official in Bogotá, "to help with the military and police and with trade concessions."

Colombians complain about the U.S. completion of these two modest goals—since the \$65 million in weapons is being used against guerrillas and since the U.S. broke the coffee pact, which cost Colombia \$400 million in desperately needed hard currency. The Colombian people are now concerned that the U.S. will try to resolve the drug war with the hammer used in Panama, and they are afraid they will become the nail.

Ken Dermota is a freelance writer based in Bogotá.

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By Jim Wurst

IT WAS PROBABLY THE DESIRE FOR A DRAMATIC photo opportunity that lead Washington to plan a shipboard summit off the coast of Malta, but inadvertently the U.S. gave high visibility to one of the least visible areas of the nuclear arms race—nuclear weapons at sea.

The U.S.—which has the largest navy in the world and over 8,000 nuclear warheads in its naval arsenal—has steadfastly refused to consider any reductions in, or even negotiations on, this category. But with progress being made in most other weapons categories and increased diplomatic and domestic pressure, the Bush administration may be running out of room to maneuver.

The Soviet Union has stepped up its campaign to include naval forces—especially nuclear forces—on the arms-control agenda. Speaking at the U.N. at the end of September, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze sounded impatient over the U.S.' stonewalling. "I feel it my duty to emphasize that reluctance to engage in active talks on reducing naval forces is a sign of neglect of [national] obligations," he said. "Leaving naval forces outside the process of reducing armed forces and armaments would be harmful to universal security."

Moscow's ambassador to the U.N., Aleksandr Belonogov, followed up on Shevardnadze's point in a speech in October, saying, "Active efforts exerted virtually in all areas of arms control stand in sharp contrast with an artificially preserved lull in matters relating to naval armaments ... [and] would leave open a dangerous area of the arms race." Belonogov and other Warsaw Pact representatives argued before a U.N. committee for multilateral negotiations on naval forces and for greater openness in naval operations.

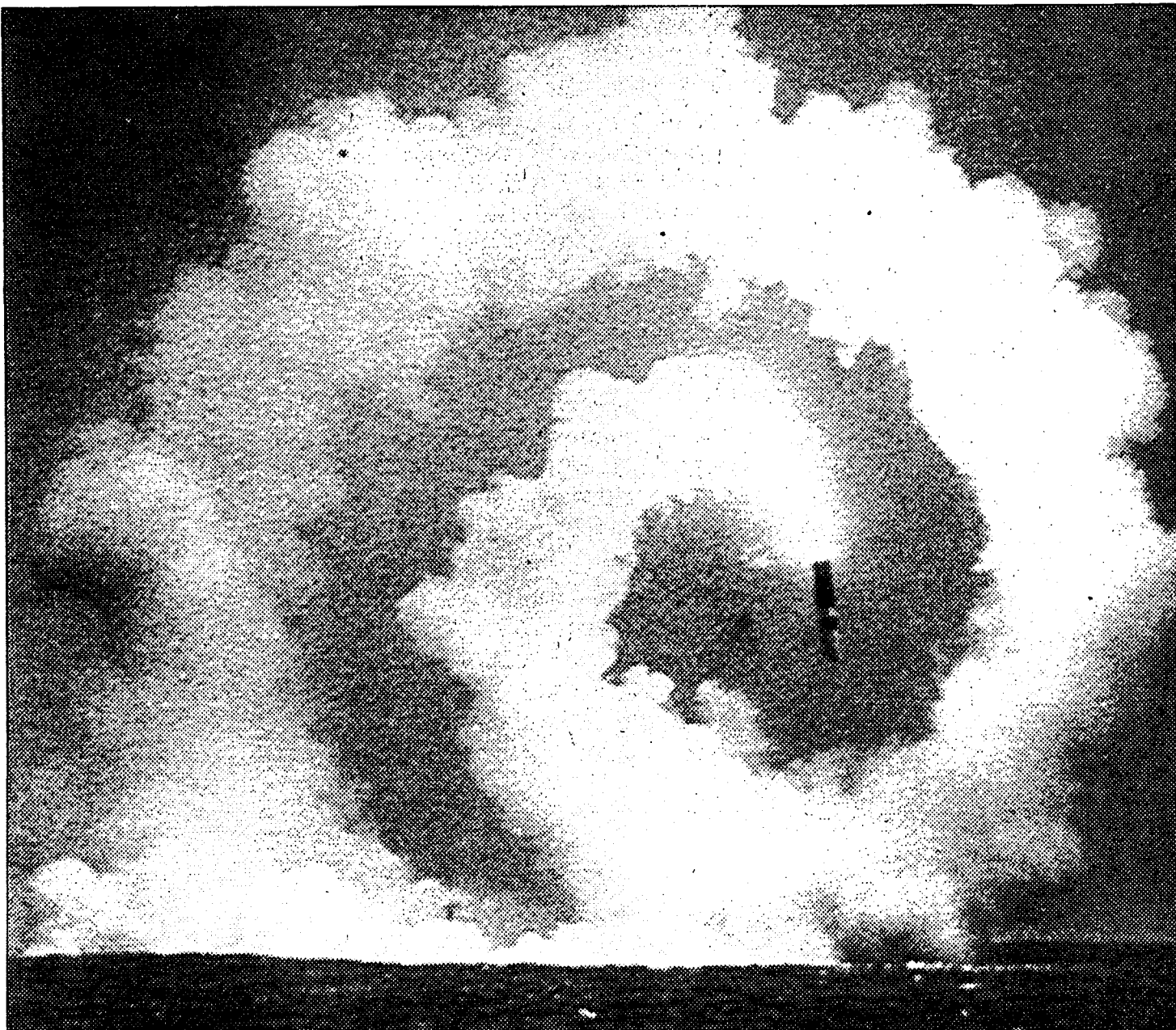
Also in October, Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, a top adviser to Mikhail Gorbachov, wrote in *Pravda* that "the U.S. stance is inconsistent. Washington is pressuring us into recognizing the interests of the U.S. and its allies and at the same time ignores our interests and concerns over their activities on the high seas and in areas close to the Soviet Union."

Finally, at Malta and a few days earlier in Rome, Gorbachov himself raised the issue. He proposed negotiations on naval forces and suggesting banning all tactical—or short-range—nuclear weapons from the superpowers' navies, as well as cutting back on their forces in the Mediterranean Sea.

The song remains the same: At a joint news conference at the end of the summit, President George Bush said, "The chairman raised the question of naval arms control, and I was not particularly positive in responding.... I'm disinclined to think that that is an area where we will have immediate progress."

Washington is largely isolated on this matter. While Britain and France—with their own naval nuclear forces—back Bush, most other NATO countries would like to see naval forces on the bargaining table. The Nordic countries—where peace movements have made nuclear weapons a priority—are particularly interested in including naval forces in the European arms-control talks.

Not surprisingly, the Bush administration's unqualified rejection of naval disarmament talks extends to the U.N. The U.N. is not a favored forum for the U.S. to hold arms-



The Trident II missile goes out in a blaze of glory during a test launch at Cape Canaveral, Fla.

An invisible arms race: nuclear weapons at sea

control negotiations—too many extraneous countries want a say in how such global negotiations are carried out. Every year the U.N. Disarmament Commission produces a set of guidelines for naval disarmament, and every year the U.S. blocks consensus on adopting those guidelines. In December, when the U.N. General Assembly voted on a resolution calling for continuing consideration of naval disarmament, the vote was 154 to one.

Such U.S. intransigence has not stopped other countries from raising the issue in U.N. bodies. Sweden, Indonesia and New Zealand have been the most active in demanding naval arms control.

Sweden's ambassador for disarmament, Maj. Britt Theorin, is one of the most outspoken advocates of naval arms control. She told a U.N. committee in October, "Tactical nuclear weapons at sea should be brought ashore," and she added that "limitations on sea-borne nuclear missiles are urgently required." She also criticized the policy of the U.S. and other countries to neither confirm nor deny the presence of nuclear weapons on ships. "The resistance in principle against greater openness at sea is a sign of fear. If a sanctuary of military secrecy of this kind is upheld, demands for openness in other

military spheres will lose in credibility," she said. "The policy neither to confirm nor to deny does not build confidence between states. Instead, whereas naval visits are intended to be confidence-building, this practice in fact undermines confidence and should be abandoned."

While the U.S. maintains that neither confirming nor denying the presence of nuclear weapons aboard ships is its right under international law, the policy has made port calls lightning rods for protests and has offended countries that consider such secrecy an affront to their sovereignty. This policy was key to the military break between the U.S. and New Zealand when the latter declared itself a nuclear-weapons-free zone in 1985.

Pick your poison: There are two types of weapons at the heart of the debate: submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) and sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs). Submarine-launched missiles, which are on the table in the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START), are the only naval nuclear weapons being considered in any negotiations. So far the U.S. and Soviets have agreed to a combined limit of 4,900 warheads each on SLBMs and intercontinental missiles; the mix of these missiles is still undecided. According to the Stockholm International

Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) in Sweden, the U.S. has 608 SLBMs with 5,300 warheads, or 41 percent of its total strategic stockpile. The USSR has 926 missiles with 3,600 warheads, 31 percent of its total. Both sides are modernizing their submarine fleets.

On the U.S. side, the Trident program is the most expensive weapon system in history. Involving both the Trident submarine and the Trident I and II missiles, the whole program could cost more than \$50 billion. It was not until the 1989 budget crunch and the failures of the Trident II missile tests last summer that Congress started talking about scaling back the program. If the Trident program were fully implemented, this weapons system alone would exceed the total START limit on warheads. Obviously this is a good place to look for budget cuts.

Michael Ross, a nuclear-free-seas campaigner for Greenpeace, said the defense budget before Congress cuts some money from Trident, but he added, "There is no indication that the cuts they made will have any impact on the program." He said Greenpeace estimates if the program stopped now at 10 submarines and the Trident I were not replaced by the Trident II missile, \$22 billion could be saved. He called this "a tough fight but winnable."

The Soviet counterpart to Trident is called Typhoon. SIPRI reports that five Typhoon submarines have been launched and that three more could be added. Each submarine has 20 missile tubes, and each missile has six to nine warheads. A new class of missile for Typhoon is reportedly having technical

Continued on page 10

INSHORT

By Joel Bleifuss

Crack journalist

Last October *Nation* editor Jefferson Morley created a minor media sensation when he spent an evening smoking crack and then wrote about his findings in *The New Republic*. It was not so much that Morley smoked crack but how he described the high that raised the ire. Morley, recounting his thoughts during morning-after ablutions, wrote, "What if there were a drug (I inquired of the mirror) that could chemically induce feelings of upper-middle-classness? It would be attractive to the poor, and wildly popular among those who had no prayer of ever achieving that comfortable station in life. And it would be despised by people who had worked long, hard years to obtain that same mental state without resorting to the drug. It would be popular, cheap and the cause of anti-social behavior. It would be a lot like crack." He also had the verve to observe, "If all you have in life is bad choices, crack may not be the most unpleasant of them." For an administration whose solution to inner-city decay is the current drug war, such talk is treason. Drug Czar William Bennett condemned Morley as "a defector in the drug war." In conclusion, Morley wrote, "Crack was a parody of Reaganism ... a brief high with a bad aftertaste and untold bodily damage. I flushed the toilet and straightened my tie. ... I remembered meeting a University of Texas alum, and her bemused expression when I asked her if she thought Bill Bennett had smoked marijuana at UT in the late '60s. Well, obviously not enough," she said."

Rather high

CBS anchorman Dan Rather has also experimented with drugs, and not just in the line of duty. In 1980, *Ladies' Home Journal* took a look at the "Soft Side of a Tough Anchorman." The magazine reported, "As a man who wants to see and hear and do everything, has he [Rather] smoked marijuana himself? Dan eyes his visitor for a full 10 seconds. ... I obey the law," he says carefully, then waving away the dodge, adds, "I don't want to be coy with you. I have not smoked pot in this country. As a reporter—and I don't want to say that is the only context—I've tried everything. I can say too with confidence, I know a fair amount about LSD. I've never been a social user of any of these things, but my curiosity has carried me into a lot of interesting areas. As an example, in 1955 or '56 I had someone at the Houston police station shoot me with heroin so I could do a story about it. I came out understanding full well how one could be addicted to smack and quickly." Unfortunately, Rather has abandoned his former "understanding" in favor of *48 Hours* on jingo street.

Drug war fells Georgia teacher

Last spring Vicki Sherling of Moultrie, Ga., thought life was treating her just right. The 38-year-old mother of two and science teacher at Colquitt County High School had been named the county's 1989 teacher of the year. Then on May 19, the Colquitt County drug squad, acting on an anonymous tip, raided her home and found rolling papers, less than a gram of marijuana and 22 marijuana plants that her husband Michael was cultivating in a backyard greenhouse. She and her husband were arrested. Michael pleaded guilty to manufacturing marijuana and possession of less than an ounce of marijuana. The judge sentenced him to 10 years in prison. A jury cleared Vicki of all charges, but the county school board, citing "inferred immorality," fired her. The Georgia Association of Educators and the National Education Association rallied in support and are helping pay her legal fees. Sherling has filed suit against the county school board in federal court. She is asking for reinstatement, back pay and punitive damages—the last of which she wants a jury to decide. Sherling told *In These Times*: "I keep winning the polls [by the local paper and the county association of educators] six-to, seven-to, eight-to-one. The typical trip to the grocery store means I stop and talk to four or five people, half of whom I do not know. They say they are behind me and they hope I get my job back. A man here in town, whom I don't know, organized a protest on my behalf. He says that from his own poll of the students, almost 100 percent are anxious for me to come back to work. I have a teenage son and a pre-teen son; they were surprised and upset when this happened, but they found out what courage is. That's what worried us most, what effect would it have on them. Everyone has been really supportive. No one is slamming doors in my sons' faces. Teachers around the country are very upset because the board's



Evan Johnson



An Earth Firster, above, shows his solidarity with Northern California's wildlife, while, below, Earth First!/IWW organizer Judi Bari gives her ever-present bullhorn a brief respite.

Earth First! brings Wobblies back to the woods

In Northern California 70 years ago, the once-powerful unionists known as Wobblies introduced tree-spiking, passive-resistance sit-ins and free-speech rallies into their fight for better working conditions for loggers. Now Earth First!, a radical environmental organization, has brought the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) into its fight to save forests from clear-cutting lumber companies. This past November, the Earth First! branch of the IWW was formed with 26 members.

"There are still more hippies than loggers," laments Earth First!

and union organizer Judi Bari in Ukiah, heartland of California logging country. "But the hippies have been here so long that they're starting to take on the characteristics of oldtimers. Now you can see hippies carrying guns and loggers growing dope. And we're all trying to keep the timber companies from liquidating their assets and selling out.

"It's desperate here. We're near the end. Tree sitters and millworkers will all be left without forests or jobs if we don't do something to stop them."

Pete Kayes is a new Wobbly and a longtime blacksmith and pondworker for Pacific Lumber Company, one of the giant lumber companies in the area. He says, from experience, that the unions in the area are "more management tools to control em-

ployees than attempts by employees to control their own destinies. Once people figure out what we're really about, maybe they won't feel so stuck. The way it is now, people are so intimidated by management they can't differentiate Wobblies from Girl Scouts. But sooner or later the management will do something bad enough to force action."

Throughout the '80s, environmentalists have been locked in battle with lumber corporations that are clear-cutting forests. They are now being joined by loggers who are beginning to reconsider their long-held antipathy towards environmentalists. The loggers are angry at both the companies that deplete resources and send millwork abroad and gyppo (a Wobbly term for scab lumberjack) truckers who employ undocumented aliens at low rates.

The call has been put out in the internationally distributed *Industrial Worker* for all footloose Wobblies, who traditionally were often hobos, to come to Northern California and help their brothers and sisters use time-honored Wobbly techniques to bring attention to the destruction of the forests.

Today's Wobblies are guerrilla ecologists, anarchists, feminists, political performance artists and other counterculture types who share a common vision of the environment being ravaged by corporate greed. "I didn't come here to run a museum," says Jeff Ditz, general secretary-treasurer at IWW headquarters in Chicago. A former United Auto Workers member, Ditz adds, "This is the new IWW for the '90s."

Most union sympathizers think of the Wobblies as little more than a historical society that carries the faded flame of anarcho-syndicalist ideals. Wobblies believe government should be conducted through economic rather than political or geographic representation. Founded in 1906 by radical unionists, the IWW suffered a major setback during and after World War I, when most of its leaders were jailed for criminal syndicalism or fled the country.

Today the Wobblies number about 1,000, consisting in part of a handful of labor activists who are over 75. There is no one between the ages of 55 and 75—"McCarthyism knocked them out," says Ditz. The rest—a blend of anarchists, ecologists and feminists—range in age from 18 to 55.

Active IWW branches thrive in San Francisco, where bicycle messengers are being organized; at recycling centers in Berkeley, Calif., and Ann Arbor, Mich.; at New York City's Living Theatre; among oil-field laborers in Colorado; and at a housing rehab firm in Seattle.

According to Bari, Earth First!'s

anarchic system parallels the IWW libertarian ideas of a decentralized government and disdain for political leadership. But this disinclination to centralize has left Earth First'ers open to infiltrators like Tom Metzger of Southern California. Metzger is trying to blend Odinism—a form of Germanic pagan nature worship—white supremacy and anti-authority direct action into a local Earth First! group.

The main obstacle to the Earth First'ers acceptance in the IWW is an embarrassing record of sexist and racist episodes, stemming mainly, according to Bari, from the Southern California and Arizona Earth First! membership. At a recent Earth First! conference, redneck Earth First'ers met their hippie counterparts from the north who were aghast at the prominent neo-Nazi-flavored display of American flags. These they promptly burned, coming up with a new motto: "Earth First! Nationalism Last!"

To get the terms straight, Earth First! rednecks are not the same as logger rednecks. According to Bari, the former are refugee redneck wanna-bes from the city, while loggers "often are more attuned to environmental issues than anyone else—after all, it's their lifestyle, their homes, their work." And hippy Earth First'ers are those San Francisco back-to-the-landers whose marijuana farms have been stoking the local economy since the '70s.

Despite the drug war, marijuana is still the coin of the realm in Humboldt and Mendocino counties. According to Bari, there are redneck loggers who have wept while felling ancient redwoods and there are hippie marijuana barons who have clear-cut old growth to make way for their cash crop.

Bari, who came to Mendocino County five years ago as a carpenter and union organizer, says the IWW

fills in gaps in Earth First!'s philosophy, like an overall social analysis and an assessment of the consequences of revolutionary acts. She thinks the Wobblies will have a good influence on the local radical ecologists.

Folklorist Archie Green, whose book *Wobblies and Other Spinners: Laborlore Explorations* will be published this year, says the IWW, conceived as a broad-based labor union, has historically drawn people together across job lines. "Wobblies were more important for techniques they imparted than for their victories over big business," he says. "What's interesting about Earth First!'s involvement with the IWW is that it pits the Wobblies against the two established logging unions in the area—old enemies dating back to 1910: the International Woodsmen of America and the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America."

"Some say their ideas are outmoded or unworkable," says Green. "But they have the richest tradition of workers' stories, songs and bravery. From my point of view, they've been good at mixing culture and economics, understanding the cultural dimension of the work experience. People in the labor movement have downplayed or made fun of this aspect because most unions don't involve themselves in workers' cultural identity. But the young people joining Wobblies now are more aware of the complexities that go into modern life. There aren't many members, but they have a subtle and sophisticated understanding of American life."

Not all would agree that Earth First'ers or the Wobblies have a subtle grasp of anything, but the newest IWW branch suggests a new framework for America's amorphous radicalism is in the making.

—Julia Gilden

Whipping up that drug-war spirit

Law and order legislators throughout the country may turn to whipping as a way to raise the stakes in the drug war without significant monetary costs to the public.

The Delaware state Senate is expected to pass a bill in its next session that would bring back the whipping post. The bill's sponsor, Senate Majority Leader Thomas Sharp, a Wilmington Democrat, has so far garnered support from 10 of the Senate's 21 members. He plans to bring the legislation to the floor before he puts his law-and-order reputation up for re-election next year.

Delaware has already instituted some of the harshest anti-drug sentences in the nation in an attempt to drive drug traffickers into neighboring states. Whipping advocates hope that by adding insult and injury to minimum sentences of three years in prison for possession of as little as five grams of cocaine,

heroin or amphetamines, traffickers will find it unprofitable to deal in Delaware. "The whole idea is to have [traffickers] bypass us. Let New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania worry about it," said Senate staffer Jack Russell, who wrote the legislation.

At the turn of the century, prisons were seen as the cure for crime, displacing whipping as the nation's preferred form of punishment. But many states continued to exercise the lash in conjunction with prison sentences.

Graeme Newman, author of *Just and Painful*, writes that controlled whipping can serve as a valuable and economical alternative to incarceration, but it serves no purpose if instituted in conjunction with incarceration.

Although corporal punishment is no longer a part of the U.S. penal system, lack of effective control over prisons permits widespread physical, sexual and psychological violence against prisoners. And many states allow the whipping of children who live in schools and juvenile de-

tention centers.

The U.S. Supreme Court has never ruled that whipping is a violation of Eighth Amendment proscriptions against "cruel and unusual punishment."

In 1963 the Delaware Supreme Court refused to rule on the constitutionality of the state's previous whipping law, which remained on the books until Republican legislators repealed it in 1970. No one has been whipped by the state since the '50s.

If passed by the Democratic state Senate, the bill faces a challenge in the Republican House and the threatened veto by Republican Gov. Michael Castle.

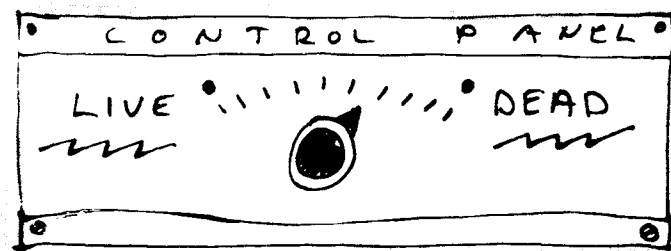
But in the event public flogging returns to Delaware, it would entail "no fewer than five nor more than 40 lashes well laid on ... to be inflicted publicly by strokes on the bare back." Senate staffer Russell says these floggings would take place at a public square in one of the state's larger communities. Such whippings would likely be televised.

—Matthew Reiss

decision says that the reason I was immoral was that I willingly allowed my husband to smoke marijuana. Willingly? No, we argued about it. Allowed? How can you allow an adult? This drug war—it's like a witch hunt. Your whole life is destroyed for something you didn't do. All they have to say is the word 'drug' and your name is ruined. I don't smoke cigarettes. I don't drink. I have never smoked marijuana. I was acquitted completely. Doesn't that mean anything in America? The one good thing now is that after three months, my husband got out of prison and I don't go to bed crying anymore."

Death and deterrence

There is one list on which Louisiana does not rank at the bottom. The Bayou State leads the nation in per-capita executions. Since 1977, when it reinstituted the death penalty, Louisiana has electrocuted 18 people. In fact, during June and July 1987, eight people made the trip to the electric chair in as many weeks. Michael Kroll reports for Pacific News Service that since that summer sizzle, only one jury in Louisiana has handed down a death penalty. Helen Prejean, a nun who ministers to the condemned and their families, says, "When we began dispatching people with such vigor in 1987, juries began to see the effect of their words, and that had a deterrent effect on bringing in death sentences."



Outlets—electric and otherwise

One person who is not ambivalent about the Louisiana death penalty is Sam Jones. As the state's official executioner, Jones (who for his own protection goes by an alias) has juiced each of the 18 people killed by the state. For each flip of the switch he is paid \$400. Jones told an Australian TV reporter, "My feeling is it's too quick, too easy." Jones says he also would be glad to torture the prisoners—for example, pull out their fingernails—if the state so ordered, anything to "exterminate this trash. ... There's nothing to it. To me it's no different executing somebody than going to the refrigerator and getting a beer." After each execution, Jones goes home and paints dark figures silently screaming. "They are not pictures of death," he explains. "They don't represent anything to me. It's just an outlet, the way some people jog."

A colony for the truly criminal

Are you in the market for an Australian mountaintop retreat overlooking the Whitsunday Islands and the Great Barrier Reef? Then check out a real-estate development called Parc Exclusif. The eight available lots are priced from \$500,000 to \$10,000,000. The ZADA Company of Airlie Beach guarantees buyers not only "clean air" but a "safe-refuge home from political troubles, nuclear explosions, earthquakes, etc."—not to mention "safe, secure living without racial problems."

Rhymes and crimes

The following poem was submitted by reader Jack Woltjen of Chicago:

Georgie Porgie, puddin and pie
Crossed the Potomac and started to lie
Lied about the contra thing
His Panama past had a similar ring
Went way down south to throttle a pimp
To scuttle his image of being a wimp
The press and the Congress bowed down to this hawk
And even Mike Royko surrendered his squawk
Now 24 kids like deep in the ground
While the White House is grabbing at short bites of sound
And Georgie opines this was God's given mission
While most of us know it was right-wing ignition.

News clips, memos, press releases, reports, anecdotes, raw gossip—send them all to "In Short," *In These Times*, 2040 N. Milwaukee, Chicago, IL 60647. Include your address and phone number.

By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

WHILE CONGRESS WAS IN RECESS AND Bush administration officials were secretly preparing an invasion of Panama, a small scandal erupted at the White House Council of Economic Advisers (CEA). This affair raised important questions not only about government ethics but also about American trade policy toward Japan. It spotlighted the Bush administration's disregard for the country's \$50 billion trade deficit with Japan.

On December 13, House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt (D-MO) and 11 other House Democrats called on the White House to investigate conflict of interest charges against CEA consultant Gary Saxonhouse. Saxonhouse, the House members charged, was serving on the advisory board of a Japanese government agency while he was employed as the CEA's Japan expert. (Saxonhouse's Japanese connection was reported in the Dec. 6, 1989, issue of *In These Times*.)

The White House dismissed Gephardt's charges as a "cheap political shot." *Washington Post* columnist Hobart Rowen accused Gephardt and the other Democrats of "McCarthyism." And prominent former government officials like Harvard professor Richard Cooper charged that Gephardt was really attacking Saxonhouse for his economic views rather than for his association with a Japanese government agency.

The Japanese viewed Gephardt's call for an investigation of Saxonhouse as an attack on the Bush administration's submissive trade policy. Tokyo's *Asahi Shimbun* editorialized, "It appears that the purpose of [Gephardt's charges] is to restrict the activities of the CEA, which is supporting a relatively stable policy toward Japan. This is an example of the recent congressional mood in which they will take up anything as criticism of Japan."

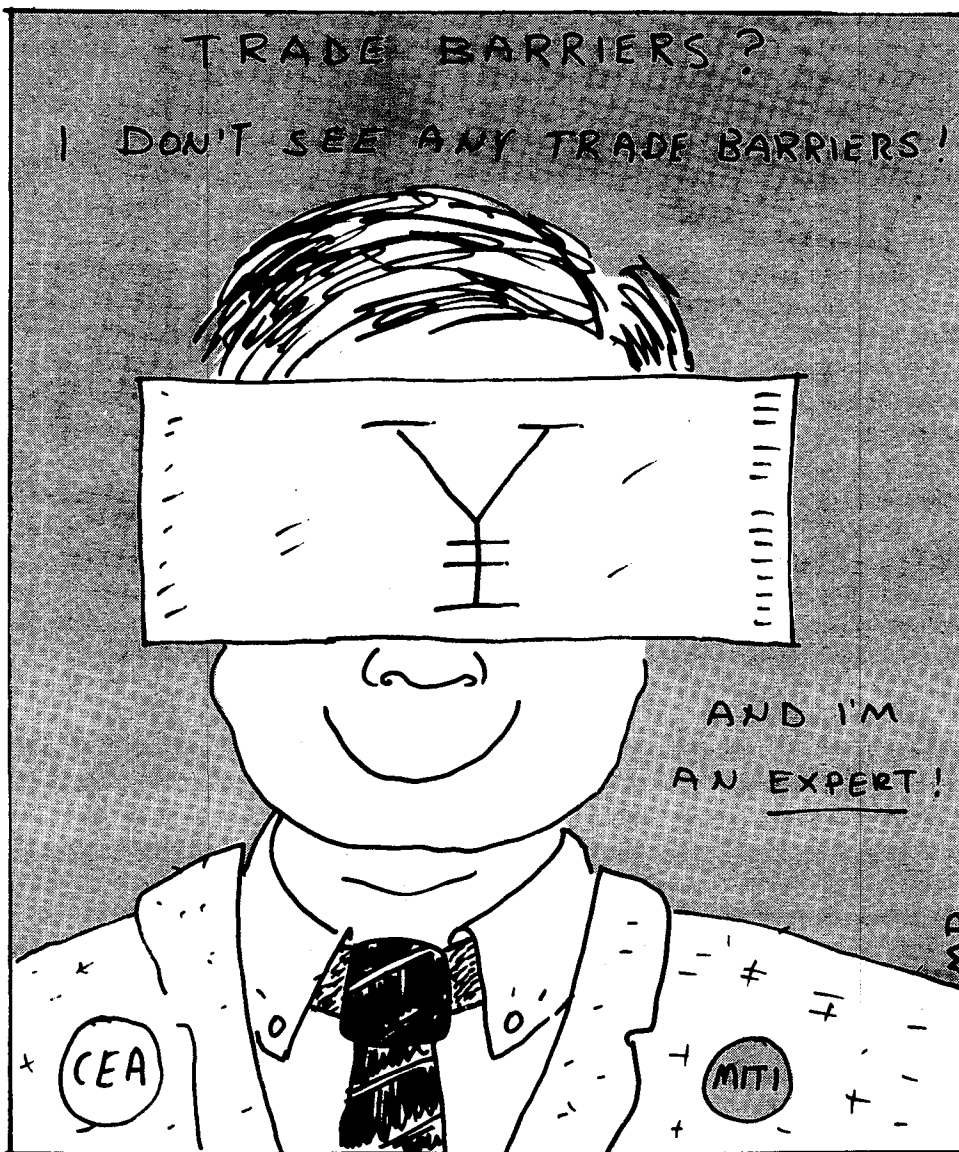
As Gephardt voiced his charges, several House and Senate committees were threatening to hold hearings on the Saxonhouse affair in January. But before the issue could be debated, Saxonhouse resigned from the CEA effective on January 1. The question of whether he was unfairly attacked persists.

A friend in high places: Saxonhouse's defenders claim that he was a minor CEA official and that his association with the Japanese government was unpaid and entirely academic, but the facts don't support this argument. At the CEA Saxonhouse was, indeed, a part-time consultant who retained his position as professor of economics at the University of Michigan, but he was singularly responsible for the CEA's view of Japan—and in the Bush administration the CEA has had significant influence over the government's trade policies with Japan.

Saxonhouse was also an official government participant in the U.S.-Japan negotiations over the Structural Impediment Initiatives (SII). The Bush administration set up these talks last May to respond to Congress' demand that it address the structural impediments that Japan had erected against American imports. The SII talks are currently the principal setting at which the two governments are discussing their economic differences.

Regardless of Saxonhouse's character and views, his Japanese connection posed a significant conflict of interest for an official di-

Conflicting Japan policy and a conflict of interest



rectly concerned with U.S.-Japan policy. In July 1987, Japan's Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) established a Research Institute of International Trade and Industry. According to MITI's own statement,

U.S.-JAPAN

the institute's purpose was not merely academic but to "aid MITI in its policy-formation process."

Saxonhouse was one of seven American academics, including Harvard's Cooper, appointed to the MITI 22-person advisory board, which was to hold meetings in Tokyo every two years. Board members were not paid for their services, but they were given something of considerable value to American academics: expense-paid trips to Japan. Tokyo is one of the most expensive cities in the world, and a one-week trip, including airfare, can easily cost \$7,500. Robert Angel, a Japan expert and political scientist at the University of South Carolina, said, "You can knock the heels off of academics with an airplane ticket."

Members of the advisory board were also invited to speak for generous honoraria at the research institute's functions. Saxonhouse spoke at an institute conference in January 1988 in Tokyo and at a seminar in Osaka in October 1988, as well as attending the board's first meeting last spring.

A CEA spokesman claimed that Saxonhouse's membership in the group did not pose a conflict of interest because he joined the CEA after appearing at the board meeting

and was scheduled to leave the CEA before another meeting would take place, but this argument proved exactly the opposite. As a temporary employee of the CEA rather than as a permanent civil servant, Saxonhouse would be more tempted to act in such a way as to maintain his connections after leaving government.

Saxonhouse's continuing membership in the MITI organization also allowed the Japanese to believe that they had a friend in high places. At the first SII meeting last September in Tokyo, a MITI representative declared to all present his pleasure at seeing a member of their advisory board in attendance. Former Commerce Department official Clyde Prestowitz said of Saxonhouse's Japanese connection, "What troubles me most is the signal it sends; the Japanese think they have an ally in the U.S. government, and people in the U.S. bureaucracy think there is nothing wrong with maintaining ties with a foreign government that thinks this way."

To his credit, Saxonhouse informed the CEA of his Japanese government ties when he was hired last spring. To CEA Chairman Michael Boskin's discredit, he did not require that Saxonhouse resign from the MITI board. "We saw no ethics problems in his associations," CEA spokesman Steve Landefeld said.

Extreme views: The other question raised by the Saxonhouse affair is why the CEA hired a person of his views as its Japan expert. Rowen describes Saxonhouse as "America's leading expert on the Japanese economy," but this is like calling supply-

sider Arthur Laffer America's leading expert on the American economy. Saxonhouse's views on U.S.-Japan relations are highly controversial and represent an extreme position in the current debate.

The different positions on U.S.-Japan economic relations could be arrayed on a spectrum from west to east. On the west side are people like Prestowitz and TRW Vice President Pat Choate, who believe that Japan has erected significant barriers against American trade and that the trade barriers can only be removed by demanding the Japanese meet specific import quotas. In the center is Brookings Institution Japan expert Robert Lawrence, who believes that such barriers exist but that not much can be done about them. On the far east is Saxonhouse, who believes that there are no barriers at all.

He has argued this view in papers and congressional testimony. Appearing before a House committee on June 9, 1987, Saxonhouse declared that "Japan's trade policies are not an important determinant of either Japan's surplus or America's deficit." He insisted that the American economy had done better in '80s than had Japan's. Incredibly, he asserted that higher American exports of Japanese goods "meant lower Japanese investment" in Japan—a position clearly contradicted by recent trends. He also assured the committee that the 1985 revaluation of the yen would soon reduce the American trade deficit. But this claim has also proven false.

Few economists share Saxonhouse's position that Japan's trade barriers are insignificant. The four economists who testified at a November 7 Senate Finance Committee hearing on the SII talks differed widely on what should be done to remove the barriers, but all agreed that Japan had erected them. Rudiger Dornbusch of MIT described the Japanese market as "closed," and Lawrence called the Japanese market "unusually closed."

These economists pointed to the composition of Japan's imports, which are drastically skewed against imports of manufactured goods. For instance, in West Germany, which also runs a large trade surplus, manufactures account for 37 percent of imports; in Japan, they account for only 4.4 percent. The economists also noted that Japan has run a large trade surplus even though the country's goods sell for 30 to 40 percent higher there than in the rest of the world.

Given the extreme nature of Saxonhouse's views, it is very significant that Boskin selected him as his Japan expert and sent him to represent the CEA at the critical SII talks, where the issue is precisely whether Japan has erected trade barriers. Boskin's choice of Saxonhouse reveals how extreme the positions of Bush's CEA are. Boskin is the most doctrinaire proponent of laissez-faire economics to hold the office since it was established after World War II.

Saxonhouse's presence at the SII talks also shows how blithely the administration is treating these negotiations. As Dornbusch charged at the November hearings, SII "is yet another unfortunate and unproductive way of dealing with our large trade-balance deficit and the continued closeness of the Japanese market."

Saxonhouse's resignation was appropriate. The real problem in the White House, however, was not Saxonhouse but Boskin and the man who appointed him. □

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By David Moberg

THE UNITED MINE WORKERS' NINE-MONTH battle with Pittston Coal—one of the most varied, innovative and militant labor struggles in recent decades—has tentatively ended in what appears to be a mildly qualified victory for the miners.

Late last week lawyers were still arguing over final language of the still-secret pact, and there are several big hurdles to jump before the contract will even be submitted to the 1,900 United Mine Worker (UMW) strikers and to qualified laid-off workers. Coal analyst Joel Price of the securities firm Donaldson, Lufkin & Jenrette, however, calls the tentative contract "a smashing victory for the union."

If that assessment holds, union members across the country may take inspiration from what the Pittston miners did. Maybe a decade from now—in a wildly optimistic scenario—Pittston will represent for labor in the '90s

LABOR

what the air traffic controllers' defeat symbolized for labor in the '80s.

UMW President Richard Trumka started with a sophisticated plan to win public allies and to conduct campaigns of corporate financial, legal and stockholder pressure. When the contract expired in 1988, the union at first did not strike. Then Pittston axed all health care for its disabled and retired miners. The union fought back with a vigorous "inside" campaign, disrupting work enough to prompt Pittston to lay off 200 miners in retaliation.

When the miners went on strike last April, UMW leaders strongly discouraged violence—despite company provocations and massive intervention by state police on the side of Pittston. Taking a page from the civil-rights movement, strikers peacefully sat down in front of mine entrances and coal trucks and submitted to mass arrests. Nevertheless, leaders were not able to suppress some violence such as throwing rocks and flattening tires.

A broad base: Miners mobilized mass support from their wives, children and community; local and national clergy; and other unions. Some 40,000 supporters—including a European labor delegation on an unprecedented visit—flocked to Camp Solidarity, a union-run kitchen, campground and rallying point in the Virginia coalfields. Other coalminers walked off the job in an industrywide sympathy strike last summer. Ninety-eight miners and a minister seized a Pittston coal plant near Carbo, Va., for four days last September, with thousands of supporters protecting them by peacefully blocking entrances to the facility. District union President Jackie Stump won a stunning write-in election victory to the Virginia state legislature, and the union brought the rest of the coal industry behind a bill introduced by Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) that would have forced Pittston to comply with a key union demand.

The Rockefeller legislation combined with international embarrassment may have been what finally forced Labor Secretary Elizabeth Dole to intervene last October by appointing veteran mediator William Usery, who brought the negotiators to terms by New Year's Eve.

There were four central points in the dispute: retiree benefits, health care, job security and, to a lesser extent, work rules. But

Innovative Pittston strike nears end



Striking miners and supporters at a rally in July. The miners donned camouflage as an unofficial uniform during the nine-month Pittston battle.

before miners will vote on—or even see—the contract, a massive, tangled web of litigation and fines must be dissolved. Foremost is the unprecedented \$65 million in fines assessed against the union, mainly by Virginia Circuit Court Judge John McGlothlin. McGlothlin fined the union from \$100,000 to \$500,000 for each in a long list of rock-throwing and highway-"roving" incidents that involved unidentified people in camouflage—even though no arrests were made and police admitted that some of their undercover officers worked in "camo," the strikers' unofficial uniform.

This week the company and union are expected to ask McGlothlin to rescind the fines. Although conservatives rail against what they see as leniency for union lawlessness, county officials—to whom much of the money is owed—have said they want the penalties dropped.

In addition to the fines, dozens of actions by both the company and the union before various courts and the U.S. National Labor Relations Board, as well as some remaining felony and misdemeanor charges, remain unresolved. Although it is not unusual for labor settlements to dissolve all litigation, the Pittston controversy is extremely convoluted and Pittston is reportedly dragging its heels. Contract approval and a resumption of production—now cut by as much as two-thirds—are hostage to these still-chancy legal settlements.

Crucial step: Before the miners vote, the contract must be approved by the five trustees of the industrywide pension and health funds for retirees, since the contract departs from the national contract negotiated with the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA).

As part of a deal to permit rapid mechanization of the mines after World War II, former UMW President John L. Lewis negotiated an industrywide fund to provide pensions and

health care to miners. For legal reasons, the 1950 fund was divided into separate pension and health funds, and in 1974 new funds were established for all miners retiring after 1976. After an 111-day strike in 1978 to defend the industry funds, the 1974 fund was changed to protect only "orphan" miners—those whose employers had gone out of business—while individual companies covered their own retirees.

Both of the pension funds have been financially solid. The UMW agreed to end payments to the 1950 pension fund in its 1988 BCOA industry agreement, saving employers \$1.11 in payments per ton of coal mined. But the 1950 health fund, which covers about 118,000 retirees and widows, is now running a \$50 million to \$60 million deficit, and coal companies are fighting the fund trustees' demand for increased payments. Company efforts to dodge health-care responsibility for retirees have provoked most of the union's bitter strikes in recent years. Now the 1974 health plan is also running into financial trouble. The problems: quickly escalating health-care costs and a sharp drop in coal employment as a result of rapid productivity growth and steel-industry decline.

Pittston wants out of the funds, but miners think separate company plans would destroy comprehensive retiree protection. Under the new agreement, Pittston reportedly will make annual lump-sum payments into the 1950 health fund instead of following the standard formula for hours worked and tons mined. As one union official said, "Pittston's out of the formula but not out of the fund." The big questions for the trustees and miners are whether the new contract will adequately enforce Pittston's obligations and whether it could threaten the fund's future integrity.

Rockefeller, the UMW and the BCOA will all continue to press for federal legislation, which will undoubtedly be influenced by a new commission appointed by Dole to inves-

tigate health care for retired miners. The industry wants to transfer the estimated \$200 million surplus in the 1950 pension fund to cover health-fund deficits. The union has insisted, however, that legislation mandate continued payments by all earlier signatories of the fund—a provision that could be jeopardized, depending on how Pittston's deal is interpreted.

The union successfully fought attempts to cut active miners' current 100 percent health-care coverage, according to all reports. There are some reports of a modest increase—from \$5 to \$20—in deductibles, but one source said that Pittston plans to pay each beneficiary \$500 every six months to cover the first \$500 of health-care costs or to pocket it if not needed. The company—mistakenly, the union believes—thinks the plan will save money by being an incentive to use health care less frequently.

The union also claims to have won new job-security protections that cover leasing, subcontracting and other matters at union mines consistent with the industrywide BCOA contract.

A tentative victory: It looks like the union can reasonably claim it has preserved the basic outlines of a national contract, despite continued industry fragmentation. Under Trumka, the UMW has resisted any concessions while seeking to stabilize the industry and permit growth in efficiency. UMW spokesman John Duray says the union believes health-care costs must ultimately be socialized through national health insurance. But until then the union is willing to fight tenaciously for health care for miners, active and retired.

UMW research director Michael Buckner warns, however, that unsolved health-care problems may disrupt the industry. "If people's grandmothers lose benefits," he said, "they're not going to be too happy about going to work."

IN THESE TIMES JANUARY 17-23, 1990 7

Bill Day Detroit Free Press Tribune Media Services



By Paul Hockenos

CLUJ-NAPOCA, ROMANIA

IN THE LIBERTATII SQUARE, AS DUSK SETTLES ON its faded pastel facades and knotty pines, people begin to gather around memorials that mark the sites of their revolution's casualties. Perched in Christmas trees, amid tinsel and strips of black cloth, candles flicker in the subzero wind, illuminating weathered photographs of the victims and poems in their honor. At the same time, two weeks after troops opened fire on demonstrators here, the mood in the streets is light. In contrast to the days of the dictator, neighbors chat freely in their native tongue and students shout to one another across the 16th-century marketplace.

Over the old party headquarters on the 22nd of December Street, formerly Lenin Avenue, the Romanian flag hangs with a neatly cut hole at its center, where the emblem of the socialist republic once stood. Now the heavily guarded Transylvania branch office building of the National Salvation Front (NSF) is the seat for the Cluj interim leadership. Inside, bustle and disorder, the civilian sentries and the spirit of camaraderie invoke images of 1917, the twisted legacy of which Romanians are now trying to rectify.

The government's overthrow unfolded here as it did throughout the country. On the evening of December 21, after the army's defection, party functionaries fled before emboldened demonstrators stormed the building. The regional party secretary, still convinced of the regime's infallibility, was arrested before he could address the furious crowd from his balcony. Demonstrators burned portraits of Nicolae Ceausescu—one in every room—and emptied the well-stocked pantry, but left the bureaucrats' offices and documents untouched.

Rooting out the regime and building a democracy

With smashed windows and office door name plates covered over with cardboard, the interim body has lost no time setting about its daunting task. The leadership, which consists entirely of local dissidents, has taken over responsibility for the county until the April election. Ethnic Hungarians, a quarter of the region's population, hold proportionate representation in the new administration. At the top of their agenda is the distribution of food and international aid to schools, hospitals and factories, as well as the democratic reorganization of the city's social institutions. Specialists, from social workers to ecologists, have been brought in as advisers.

"We're checking the biographies of every person here very carefully," explains Mircea Puscă, vice president of the Cluj NSF. Puscă, a 34-year-old technical engineer, was harassed by the Securitate, Ceausescu's paramilitary police force, for years before he finally lost his job last May. "The old leaders are known," he says, "but at another level, bureaucrats continue to hold their old jobs, and, of course, their old politics too. We've got to be so thorough that there is no chance that they can come back. We owe that to those who have died."

In the beginning: The problems facing Romania's second-largest city attest to the enormity of the project ahead of the country. "All the figures here were lies," says Puscă,

through eyes bloodshot from consecutive sleepless nights. "The numbers say we've got 8,000 kilos of meat, for example, but in fact we have only 2,000. The people need food

ROMANIA

immediately, and they won't wait for long. But now we have to start from the beginning."

At the national level, the Cluj NSF is formulating proposals for the country's transition to a constitutional democracy. Their articulate representative is Doina Cornea, 60, one of the country's best known and most outspoken dissidents. Cornea, a lecturer in French at Cluj University before her dismissal, openly opposed the Ceausescu regime since the early '80s, writing essays and letters condemning its repressive policies as well as the public's apathy.

In contrast to the days of the dictator, neighbors chat freely.

Romania must work toward an "absolutely democratic society" with full individual freedom and human rights, says Cornea, who, living under house arrest, had a Securitate agent posted on her doorstep since 1986.

This country "has had Stalinism imposed upon it for 40 years. It's an illusion to think that the worst system, and the worst system only, was Ceausescu's. It's through communism in general that we forgot how to think. Now is the time to make a clear break with that."

Cornea, like the majority of opposition figures, advocates a Western-style democratic state based on private ownership and competition. The country is not in a position to experiment with new systems, she says. "Romania should at least take back the position that it held in Europe before the war." That implies cultural, economic and technical collaboration "with the West, not the Soviet Union."

Although an original member of the national NSF, which took power immediately upon Ceausescu's fall, she, as well as the Cluj administration, is critical of the Bucharest leadership. The national government includes many former party members, and underneath it a large bureaucracy left over from the dictatorship. They have no democratic tradition behind them, she argues. "Those of us who want a democratic system have to fight against those who had power in their hands before," she says, referring to the bureaucracy. "They are still strong and have a lot of political experience, much more than we do."

Just back from Bucharest, the veteran oppositionist expressed her skepticism about the direction of the NSF, which had intended only to serve as a transition government. "I made it clear that if the front becomes an electoral party, then I'm stepping out," explains Cornea, a member of the Eastern-rite Catholic Church who associates herself with the National Peasants Party. "I don't want to wake up and find myself in a communist

party." As a party, she claims, the NSF would have the unfair advantage of media control, organization and an established name.

One complex task confronting the country—and Transylvania in particular—is redressing the legacy of Ceausescu's discriminatory national-minorities policy. In addition to ethnic Hungarians—8 percent of the total population—Germans, Slavs, Poles, Jews and Gypsies were targets of the ruler's heavy-handed repression of ethnic culture. Ceausescu took draconian measures to replace their centuries-old traditions with the homogenous identity of his ideal "new socialist man."

At the bottom of his logic was undermining the independence and consciousness of the peoples most likely to resist his rule, as well as setting Romanians and the minorities against one another. Although he ultimately failed, his strategy has devastated the national cultures and, until the revolution, effectively turned the common subjects of his terror into each other's enemies.

Cluj in transition: In Cluj, a city with deep Hungarian roots, the national tensions are acute. Over the past five years, as his hold on power began to slip, Ceausescu cracked down even harder in Transylvania, closing Hungarian schools and media, deporting Hungarians to Romanian regions and banning the use of their language in public. Hungarian dissidents were jailed or simply murdered, and basic medical services were denied the minority.

The Cluj administration has prioritized the minority question. Hungarian TV and radio stations are broadcasting again, and publishing houses have reopened. The entire educational system is being revamped to enable Hungarians to study their literature and history in Hungarian schools. Nationally, the Hungarian Democratic Union (HDU) represents the minority in Bucharest, and a ministry for minority issues has been formed.

Eva Cseke Gyimesi, the HDU representative in the Cluj Front, argues that guaranteed minority rights and cultural autonomy are essential for Romanian-Hungarian coexistence. That independence, however, "doesn't mean isolation or separatism," explains Cseke Gyimesi. "Romanians must understand that Hungarians will be loyal to the Romanian nation. The fates of the two peoples in Transylvania have been intertwined for a long time. If we want to realize a qualitatively better society, the important thing is that we understand one another, bridge the misunderstandings that have developed."

She recognizes that constitutional rights alone will hold little weight unless a political culture exists to support them. Cseke Gyimesi stresses mutual cultural cooperation, using Finland's relationship with its Swedish minority as a model. Both Finnish and Swedish language instruction is obligatory there, and the autonomy of the Swedish minority is fully respected. "We have to create an atmosphere of positive assimilation," she says. "We can't force Romanians to learn Hungarian but rather convince them of its value. If Finland can do it, so can Romania."

But the chauvinism of both peoples here is so ingrained that the prospects for a genuine reconciliation are slim. Romanians, for example, refuse to acknowledge that minorities suffered repression under Ceausescu any worse than their own. Hungarians look down on the Romanians as Eastern and uncultured. "During the revolution, we were united. We fought alongside one another as

if differences had never existed," said Maria Biro, 28, a Hungarian English teacher. "But now the jubilation is over, and the enmity has resurfaced."

The end of Romania's isolation and its entrance into the European house might insure a somewhat better existence for the ethnic

minorities. Although the international community backed the Ceausescu regime for decades with financial and political support, emergency aid has flowed from the East and West since the uprising. Romania is intent on re-establishing its relationship with the West, and the Continent, with the prospect

of a united Germany, sees close ties with Romania and its neighbors as critical for a stable balance of power. A more European identity would lessen the potential leverage of the nationalist mechanisms that Ceausescu so effectively manipulated. □

Paul Hockenos is on assignment in Romania.

Romania's Nicolae Ceausescu: a liberator in Africa, a dictator at home

HARARE, ZIMBABWE— The year was 1987. Human-rights activists on Capitol Hill had geared up to cancel a brutal dictatorship's "most favored nation" trade preference. Then-President Ronald Reagan weighed in on the dictator's side, explaining, "It is better to direct our efforts to improving conditions that arouse our concern than to abandon the principal means of influence and walk away."

Was this Chile? Guatemala? South Africa? No. The dictator Reagan defended on this occasion was Nicolae Ceausescu of Romania. While Reagan spoke up for Ceausescu, a Romanian government lobbyist in Washington warned that trade sanctions could force the Romanian government to withdraw from its \$60 million joint mining venture with Occidental Petroleum's Island Creek Coal subsidiary in economically depressed Buchanan County, Va., eliminating 350 American jobs.

"Communist" though Ceausescu claimed to be, he had clearly mastered the capitalist art of employment blackmail. And, if one follows the Cold War logic that still seems to prevail in Washington, his fall must also be read as a strategic loss for the U.S. Personal entrepreneurialism and a constant drive for political independence from his powerful Soviet neighbors led the Romanian ruler into a web of odd alliances with Western interests.

Big guns: In the '70s, Ceausescu joined the CIA in arming anti-communist Angolan rebels. In the '80s, Iran-contra operative Richard Secord used Saudi funds to buy ammunition for the Nicaraguan contras in Romania, according to Jane Mayer and Doyle McManus in their book *Landslide: The Unmaking of President Reagan*. George Bush, as vice president, visited Romania in 1983 during an Eastern European tour that also took him to non-aligned Yugoslavia and independent-minded Hungary.

It hardly seems surprising that Romania was the first Warsaw Pact member to join the two organizations that function as central committee for international capitalism, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Unlike fellow World Bank member Poland—where working-class militancy places limits on the government's room for economic maneuvers—Romania has been viewed as a "responsible debtor." Ceausescu earned bankers' respect by imposing drastic economic austerity on workers and consumers so Romania could pay foreign debts promptly.

But the bizarre history of Ceausescu's adventures in Africa probably offers the most revealing picture of Romanian foreign policy. Zaire's fabulously wealthy CIA-installed dictator Mobutu Sese Seko was Ceausescu's oldest and closest African ally—and not just because billionaires of a feather flock together.

The Ceausescu-Mobutu connection began in the early '70s and continued—through an odd American link—to Ceausescu's last gasp on Christmas Day.



The late despot Nicolae Ceausescu.

They shared the same Washington lobbyist, Edward J. Van Klobert III, a former American University official who specializes in representing unpopular dictatorships.

The great liberator: For Mobutu, the Ceausescu connection was part of a broader link with Romania's main ally in the communist world, China. Thus Ceausescu's first trip to Zaire in 1972 was a harbinger of Mobutu's visit the following year with Mao Zedong in China. These flirtations matured into full-scale military collaboration two years later when Bucharest—weighing in alongside Washington, Beijing and Pretoria in the 1974-75 Angola wars—started delivering weapons to the Zaire-based National Front for the Liberation of Angola, headed by Mobutu's close friend and relative-by-marriage, Holden Roberto.

In its role as China's European partner, Romania also intervened in the war to overthrow Ian Smith's white minority Rhodesian front regime, helping the Chinese arm and train Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union, while the Soviets favored Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU. These alignments had more to do with Northern Hemisphere perceptions than real ideological differences, as the deep rooted nationalism of both movements—rather than their thin veneer of Marxism—set the tone for the Zimbabwean liberation struggle.

Ceausescu was hailed as a great hero of liberation support when he and his wife visited Harare, the Zimbabwean capital, in 1983. The Ceausescus became the second and third persons—after Mugabe himself—to have the ancient honorific of "freeman of the city" (a characteristically Zimbabwean holdover title from British colonial days) conveyed upon them in post-independence Harare. In explaining this honor, the semi-official *Harare Herald* deemed it "important for our people never to forget the crucial role played by Ceausescu and the people of Romania in assisting our armed struggle for freedom."

Making new friends: In the '80s, Bucharest diversified its African ties, with Romanian state companies competing

with Western capitalists to establish joint mining and agriculture ventures in African nations across the political spectrum—from conservative, capitalist Liberia and Gabon to non-aligned socialist Mozambique. In Mozambique, Romanians developed a prominent presence in the early '80s in the northern province of Niassa, where they were active in agriculture, especially in cotton production. But Mozambique's relations with Bucharest seem to have had relatively little to do with global power politics, except insofar as they reflected the determination of Mozambique—which has frequently been dubbed a "Soviet client state" in right-wing demonology—to actively develop its relations with both socialist camps, recognizing neither as the epicenter of Marxism.

Liberian President Samuel Doe—a dictator who, though right wing, has fallen out of favor with the U.S., probably because his government's corrupt practices hurt U.S. economic interests—signed a wide-ranging cooperation agreement with Romania in 1986, trading the National Iron Ore Company, fishing and mining rights for technical and military training and weapons. According to the London-based magazine *West Africa*, when then-U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz reproached him during a visit in 1987, Doe told Shultz that Liberia needed a protector that would provide military aid—as Washington had failed to do in 1985 when Doe was almost overthrown by a well-organized coup. It is widely believed that the U.S. favored the conspirators.

Yet Zaire remained Romania's most important black African connection. Ceausescu signed a major bilateral economic agreement with Zaire when he visited Mobutu in Kinshasa in 1987. After Ceausescu welcomed Mobutu and his wife to Bucharest in April 1988, there was talk of yet another Zaire trip by the Romanian head of state. The two leaders mapped out a broad agenda for Romanian involvement in Zairean railway modernization, minerals processing, and the development of oil pipelines, maize milling plants and a paper mill.

A fabulously wealthy Zairean entrepreneur, Bemba Saolona, has played a key role in Zaire-Romania business dealings. Bemba is believed to be Zaire's wealthiest businessman. According to *Africa Confidential*, a speculative but often reliable newsletter that focuses the seamier side of African politics, he also functions as Mobutu's front man in various private self-enrichment schemes. His involvement thus provoked strong suggestions the peculiar link between Romania and Zaire had more to do with the personal financial goals of two billionaire dictators than with the economic interests of either country.

—Steve Askin

Steve Askin is author of a forthcoming book on Zaire under Mobutu. Jane Hunter also contributed to this story.

Navy

Continued from page 3
problems.

SLCMs could easily be the most difficult arms-control issue of the coming decade. In START the Soviets had proposed limiting each side to 1,000 SLCMs, of which no more than 400 could be nuclear. They also proposed restricting them to one type of surface ship and two types of submarines. The U.S. refused any control over SLCMs. So in September, in order to jump-start the stalled START talks, Moscow agreed to take the missiles off the table and proposed that a separate agreement be negotiated. The Soviets have much to gain from such a ban. SIPRI reports that, unlike the ambitious U.S. program, the Soviet SLCM "deployments do not appear to be significant," with fewer than 100 missiles deployed on submarines.

Peace movements, especially those in Europe, have a special disdain for these

weapons because they are twins of the ground-launched cruise missiles that were at the heart of the Euromissile protests in the early '80s. As the ground-launched missiles were withdrawn under the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty, activists warned that they would simply be recycled as sea-launched missiles. This prediction came true almost immediately. John Miller, the North American coordinator for the North Atlantic Network, said, "Activists are finding that the land-based nuclear weapons they fought very hard to get rid of are now on ships that can do the same thing."

In fact, they can do more. By 1992, the U.S. Navy envisions 3,000 to 4,000 SLCMs—758 of them nuclear—on 100 ships throughout the seas. With a worldwide network of naval bases, nuclear-powered ships that can stay at sea months at a time, thousands of undetectable SLCMs and the perceived need to use force against any opponent, the SLCM is an ideal weapon for Third World interven-

tion.

Miller, who is involved in the campaign to deny nuclear-armed ships access to ports around the world, said, "If you look at the kinds of ships involved and at SLCMs ... and look at the capabilities, with the Cold War dying down, they are beginning to talk about how wonderful these are for use in the Third World."

Widening circles: The nuclear navy is not simply a superpower issue. A recent SIPRI study on the naval arms race notes that Britain, France and China have nearly 600 naval nuclear weapons, primarily strategic missiles on submarines. Almost half of Britain's nuclear weapons are sea-based, and that percentage will increase if London goes through with plans to buy four Trident submarines with Trident II missiles from the U.S. France has nearly 300 nuclear warheads at sea. China is a late entry, but as Marie Gottshalk wrote recently in the *World Policy Journal*: "To enable China to project power

into the Pacific more effectively, Deng's military modernization program has favored the Chinese navy. China has built new naval bases and up-to-date warships and missiles and is planning to build its first aircraft carrier." None of these existing or planned systems is included in any arms-control negotiations.

Getting down to business: There is more than rhetoric at work here. The Soviets have dismantled some of their sea-based weapons and have withdrawn submarines from the Baltic Sea. Two submarines have been taken out of commission so far, and plans for new classes of subs and missiles have slowed. While budget considerations have undoubtedly played a large role in these decisions, the fact remains that progress is being made.

Even the U.S. is beginning to disarm. In April 1989 the U.S. Navy decided to retire three classes of short-range weapons, for a total of 1,100 fewer missiles. But rather than doing it with fanfare, the Navy is conducting this example of unilateral disarmament in an embarrassed silence. The weapons are being dismantled because they are obsolete and, according to Ross, "The Navy is so opposed to any sort of naval arms control that they are afraid the dismantling of these weapons will draw them into arms control."

There is no shortage of ideas on how to rein in the naval arms race. Existing treaties ban nuclear weapons from some parts of the ocean and from the ocean floor, countries have banned nuclear-armed ships from their territorial waters, and Sweden has proposed a convention banning nuclear mines and an agreement on the prevention of military accidents at sea.

An important breakthrough occurred last July when a joint team of U.S. and Soviet scientists boarded a Soviet warship in the Black Sea with instruments to see if it were possible to detect the presence of radiation from nuclear warheads. The experiment worked and went a long way in proving that naval arms-control treaties—if they ever materialize—can be verified.

One of the simplest but most radical measures would be to ban all tactical nuclear weapons, including SLCMs, from surface ships. This has been a goal of peace movements and various governments for years. Gorbachov suggested the idea at Malta. The Black Sea experiment showed verification should not be a problem. Even Paul Nitze, a hawkish U.S. arms-control expert, favors such a ban. He considers progress on START more important than deploying SLCMs and worries that, although the U.S. nuclear fleet is vastly superior, an unchecked naval arms race would make the U.S. and its long indefensible coastlines "inherent losers."

The Malta summit may end up being the starting point of an unstoppable campaign to place some control over naval nuclear weapons. And in a too-neat bit of symbolism, the warships the superpowers sent to Malta demonstrated a great deal about the state of nuclear weapons at sea. As William Arkin of Greenpeace pointed out, the Soviet cruiser *Slava* was last in the news when it hosted the Black Sea verification experiment. The *USS Belknap*, on the other hand, is most famous for a 1975 shipboard fire that got within 40 feet of the ship's nuclear missiles. But, of course, since the Navy will neither confirm nor deny the presence of nuclear weapons aboard its ships, we don't really know that. □

Jim Wurst is a New York reporter specializing in disarmament and security issues.

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By William Gasperini

PANAMA CITY, PANAMA

MUCH HAS BEEN MADE OF THE WIDESPREAD support among the Panamanian population for the December 20 invasion of Panama by U.S. troops. When Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega finally gave himself up to U.S. authorities, thousands of Panamanians took to the streets to party right along with the troops on patrol in Panama City.

"Hey, this is great, Panamanians and Americans together; we kicked Noriega's ass, man!" shouted Sgt. David Roden, surrounded by several young ladies and brandishing his M-16 rifle. "Long live freedom and the USA!" he and his Panamanian friends yelled.

But scratch below the surface and one can find a few vocal critics of the U.S. actions here.

"They came in with all these attack helicopters, blasting away in a populated area and killing all these people just to get one man? That makes no sense to me," said one man who lost his home in the assault on Noriega's command headquarters. "These gringos, they want to own the world, going around taking countries. Look at the Philippines, Grenada, now us."

To the consternation of many outside observers, his comment appears to be quite rare. In fact, it sparked immediate debate among others who had similarly lost their houses in El Chorrillo, a poor neighborhood where Noriega's headquarters were located.

"What are you saying, man? They saved us. The gringos have treated us better than Panamanians ever did. They helped us out, protected us, and now they're going to give us new houses. Thank God for the USA," replied a neighbor.

Good riddance: The men were languishing in a makeshift refugee center for close to 3,000 people at Balboa High School in what was once the Panama Canal Zone. It ceased to exist with the 1977 canal treaties. The refugees camp in tents on a soccer field and in the gymnasium, while crews level El Chorrillo and prepare to erect new high-rise buildings. As people who lost everything, the El Chorrillo residents would be the most likely to criticize the invasion. Moreover, they are poor, the population sector Noriega always claimed to represent. Yet almost without exception, the people of El Chorrillo were as glad as everyone else that Noriega had fallen. The general feeling is that losing everything was the price of seeing Noriega go—assuming, of course, that new homes would now be built.

Therein lies a clue to the outpouring of support. Foreigners are perplexed by the apparent lack of Panamanian nationalism, something that grew briefly under charismatic Gen. Omar Torrijos, Noriega's predecessor. Panamanians now look to the U.S. as the great provider, able to set things right.

This seeming paradox appeared all the more poignant as the discussion was taking place on January 9, the anniversary of a pivotal date in Panamanian history. In 1964, 23 Panamanians, mostly students, died in a confrontation with U.S. forces when they tried to enter the Canal Zone—then off limits to Panamanians—to plant a flag over U.S. installations. In a capital cemetery on this date 26 years later, with American troops occupying the entire country, relatives of some of those students even tried to rewrite the history of the incident.

"There are now reports that Panamanians in the national guard also shot at them that day," said Ana del Cid, sister of Jose del Cid,

Did end justify means in Panama invasion?



Collage by Peter Hannan

who died in the riot. "We feel no bitterness toward the North Americans now. They have finally helped oust this monster to liberate us."

It could be that economic links between the U.S. and Panama are simply too strong to be scorned, and that Noriega's fatal mistake was to try to do just that. Being used to a certain lifestyle, the middle and upper sectors of Panamanian society clearly opted

PANAMA

for close ties to a protective Uncle Sam by resolutely rejecting Noriega's attempt to replace those ties with ideology. Then the very notion of nationhood in Panama is unusual. The country came into existence only after Teddy Roosevelt forced its separation from Colombia in order to build the canal.

Still, critics of U.S. policy in Latin America have been aghast at the way Panamanians have reacted to the invasion. Some of them have come to Panama to disprove what they call the media bias in reporting the "overwhelmingly positive" response to the U.S. action.

"I haven't seen this 'overwhelming' support. In fact, I've only seen people afraid to talk, looking to the future with uncertainty and wanting to know where their loved ones are," said former Attorney General Ramsey Clark. Clark came to Panama at the request of several Panamanian families in New York to investigate the whereabouts of relatives, and he claims that there is a "conspiracy of silence" about the attack.

He reached the conclusion that as many as 1,000 could have died, far above the official U.S. estimates of 220 civilians and 314 "enemy." He also affirmed that hundreds must have died in El Chorrillo (officially only 66 did), given the extent of destruction and the high population density of the neighborhood. The refugees, however, all say the U.S. soldiers helped them out by announcing evacuation procedures over loudspeakers.

Clark also focused attention on another critical question about the invasion: its legality or lack thereof. He and many others say

that Washington blatantly violated not only international laws but also the U.N. and Organization of American States (OAS) charters. And he rejected claims that Noriega was such an evil that the end justified the means.

"If it's true that every last diplomatic effort was undertaken, is it still OK for the U.S. to commit a crime?" he asked. "What kind of a defense is that?"

No choice: Some Panamanians say that, legal or not, Noriega's unwillingness to respond to diplomatic pressure—such as repeated negotiation efforts by the OAS—left the U.S. with no other option but to employ force, especially after tensions reached a flash point with the killing of Marine Roberto Paz on December 16.

"Of course, we can't feel good about being invaded, or that it had to come to this," said Jose Mulino, head of a business organization. "But you have to understand the nature of the people we are talking about, and the repression they were wielding over the country." Most of the regime's opponents have been shocked at the discoveries of large arms caches around the country. They also say that Noriega's behavior was increasingly irrational toward the end, proclaiming himself head of state before a self-formed congress and declaring a state of war existed in Panama. Panamanians say that in the end corruption was so endemic to the system Noriega had created that he employed anti-imperialist rhetoric just to maintain power. It was a system they say had to end.

The degree to which the general's actions reflected his own plans or came in response to the steadily increasing U.S. pressures, economic and otherwise, will long be debated. Certainly the ever-tightening screws of U.S. sanctions sparked discontent and dovetailed with uncertainty arising from the October coup attempt within the military to compound the pressures on Noriega.

But his opponents still claim his support was only paper-thin, and evaporated all too quickly. Critics also point to the extent of the anti-government vote in last May's elections in the poorer areas, and even among

the military, as evidence that Noriega had little substantive backing. Still, the final ending hurts.

"I feel like a cancer patient who's just awakened from a long and difficult operation," said Roberto Eisenmann, publisher of the opposition paper *La Prensa* and Noriega's most visible and vocal critic. "Part of me has been removed, and it will take a long time for the country's psyche to recover. But the operation has also given us a new lease on life."

Whatever the merits of the debate over the invasion, everyone agrees the welcome could fade quickly if U.S. aid does not follow to repair the damage to Panama's devastated economy. Hundreds of retail stores lie gutted after the widespread looting that accompanied the invasion. Dignity Battalion members reportedly shot locks off the stores and urged citizens to help themselves during the vacuum of police protection in the days immediately following the U.S. action. Insurance companies refuse to honor store claims, saying the losses are due to an act of war. And storeowners are already laying off hundreds of employees as economists predict a major ripple effect will be felt throughout the economy without a large infusion of credit to jump-start the economy.

"Unemployment was 23 percent before the invasion, and it could reach 40 percent unless help comes quickly," said Alfredo Maduro, head of the Panamanian Chamber of Commerce. More importantly, business leaders say efforts must be made to restore confidence in the economy, especially to encourage investment and the critical banking sector. But they also admit the damages of the last two years may be impossible to repair: banks have transferred funds elsewhere, and shipping companies have also moved registry, affecting another vital economic sector.

Blame for the situation rests primarily with the U.S., given the extensive sanctions imposed by President Reagan in February 1988 to pressure Noriega. While a stream of Congress members have visited to applaud the invasion, as yet there are few indications that the necessary substantive assistance will be forthcoming.

Economic recovery will be only part of the story in the coming months. The new government has its work cut out to consolidate its image, even though all independent counts of last May's election results gave President Guillermo Endara and his two vice presidents more than 70 percent of the vote. Endara became the presidential candidate due to his closeness to Arnulfo Arias, the octogenarian who dominated Panamanian politics (the civilian side) since the '40s and who most believe won the 1984 election. First Vice President Ricardo Arias Calderon reportedly harbors ambitions for the presidency, especially after his Christian Democratic Party garnered the largest proportion of votes. But on the surface, he, Endara and Second Vice President Guillermo Ford operate as a kind of triumvirate. And few Panamanians are questioning their authority.

International recognition will be more difficult. Only a handful of countries have recognized the new government, and most Latin American nations say they are studying the situation and are unlikely to acknowledge the new regime until the U.S. troops pull back to their bases.

Yet that may not happen any time soon, as new units replace heavy combat forces to help in reconstruction and to train a new

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By James Petras

The U.S. invasion and occupation of Panama has been accompanied by a barrage of government propaganda repeated and embellished by most of the mass media. Every major issue of the anti-Noriega campaign—from the reasons for the invasion and the Panamanian response to the invasion's impact on Panama and the rest of the region—has been falsified and distorted by the Bush administration.

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tion. The conflict between the U.S. and Panama was not merely bilateral, and it had little to do with the administration's articulated positions on drugs and democracy. These are only a convenient pretext for the pursuit of a policy widely opposed by Americans: the isolation, destabilization and overthrow of the Nicaraguan government.

There is now a danger that the bipartisan consensus celebrating the invasion and the public euphoria encouraged by the media's uncritical trumpeting of President George Bush's "success" will be used to support a

new wave of aggression toward Nicaragua and other popular anti-colonial movements in the region. To establish that the administration's Nicaragua agenda is primary, however, the myths being used to justify its actions need to be examined. There are eight of these to consider.

Myth one: The first myth concerns the main cause of the U.S. invasion. According to Bush, the U.S. launched the invasion to protect the lives of American citizens. It was, he said, a response to the December 16 killing of a Marine, the interrogation of a

Navy lieutenant and his wife, and Noriega's declaration of a "state of war."

There is ample evidence, however, that the invasion was planned at least three months—and perhaps as much as seven or eight months—prior to the above incidents. In addition, high-level military replacements facilitated the invasion and detailed troop and military supply movements were put in place for an invasion well before the alleged threat to American lives or property. At a press conference on December 20, Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney said, "[The plan] has been in existence for some time. It was one of the first items I was briefed on when I became secretary of defense last spring."

The decision to invade was made shortly after an October 3 U.S.-backed military coup failed. On December 24 the *New York Times* noted that "the Bush administration laid the foundations for the attack against Gen. Manuel Noriega weeks ago by drafting new military plans, rehearsing them and secretly moving tanks and helicopters to Panama." The precipitating factor in the December invasion was not the threat to American lives but the CIA's inability to pull off another coup in the aftermath of the failure in October.

The plans for that coup, dubbed "Panama 5," were worked out with congressional compliance and funded with a \$3 million budget, according to the *Times*. But when "administration officials came to believe that a successful coup was an increasingly remote possibility," attention was also given to plans to take unilateral military action, Pentagon officials said.

The only attacks on U.S. civilians occurred after the invasion. It was the Bush administration that endangered American lives. Moreover, when Noriega made his "declaration of war," he was describing a de facto situation initiated by the U.S. The administration's attempt to portray his statement as a "threat"—and hence a justification for the invasion—is not convincing. At the time it was uttered, White House press secretary Marlin Fitzwater, in an effort to distract attention from the administration's invasion plans, dismissed it out of hand as empty bluster.

In addition, the administration's active defense of the roundup, arrest and brutal interrogation of U.S. religious workers by El Salvador's secret police in the weeks preceding the invasion makes this a less than credible argument. And when alleged Nicaraguan contra forces killed an American nun and wounded a bishop last month, the administration did not consider an armed U.S. invasion of the contra camps in Honduras.

Myth two: The second administration justification for the invasion was that it needed to arrest Noriega because he was a "narcotics kingpin." No evidence has emerged, however, to demonstrate that his arrest would impact the flow of drugs, and post-invasion news reports indicate that the U.S. occupation has had no influence on drug flows. Noriega's drug connections were never a factor in his close working relations with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), the CIA or the Carter and Reagan-Bush administrations until late 1985.

If drugs constitute an important criterion for judging political allies and foes, the U.S. would invade the contra camps in Honduras and arrest contra commanders. And it would ask for the extradition of the Honduran general staff; the Guatemalan military commanders overseeing the marijuana fields; Bolivian Vice President Hugo Banzer

(the original narco-dictator) along with all of Bolivia's commanding officers; and elected Peruvian President Alan Garcia, who turns a blind eye to the massive coca fields in the Cuzco area.

Myth three: The third justification was the Bush administration's pronouncement that the U.S. armed invasion was directed at overthrowing an isolated, unpopular dictator and would be welcomed by Panamanians, all of whom were oppressed by the regime. In fact, despite a massive propaganda blitz amplified and embellished by the mass media, evidence suggests that there was substantial Panamanian resistance to the U.S. invasion (see story page 11). Noriega did have a modicum of popular support in poorer neighborhoods, where U.S. forces concentrated their firepower precisely to decimate those communities.

The first clear example of consequential Panamanian resistance was the fact that, after several days of fighting in Panama, President Bush had to dispatch 2,000 more troops to reinforce the 24,000 already there "because of the slow pace of efforts to establish control in the Panamanian capital," the *New York Times* reported on December 23. Several days into the invasion, "U.S. commanders conceded growing alarm over the unexpectedly stiff resistance by forces loyal to ... Noriega," the *Philadelphia Inquirer* wrote the next day.

There was a marked contrast between public-relations releases handed out by the Pentagon and the actual situation in Panama. While Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell in Washington painted a picture of meager, "disorganized resistance," Gen. Maxwell Thurman, who directed the invasion from Panama City, spoke of the resistance as an "organized force" and criticized the pre-invasion intelligence as too optimistic. Thurman conceded that the popular militias, or "Dignity Battalions," had substantial grass-roots support. "The target population of the Dignity Battalions was considerably larger than what we had estimated," he said on December 22.

Washington downplayed the militias' popular support and the invasion's imperial nature. And the media more than cooperated with the effort to smear Noriega. The Dignity Battalions resisting the U.S. invasion were constantly referred to as "thugs," "looters" and "vigilantes." Taking their cue from the administration, the media focused on Noriega's alleged sex, drug and religious practices. The *New York Times* wrote on December 23, "In Washington and in Panama City, administration officials and military officers began an intensive public-relations campaign to paint Noriega as, in the words of one senior officer, 'a corrupt, debauched thug.'"

The administration's public-relations effort buried news of significant working-class community resistance to the invasion. Even accepting the low estimates of the U.S. occupation forces, total casualties among the populace and the militias exceeded those of the Panamanian defense force (PDF) by a margin of nearly six to one: 2,400 to 420. The major opposition was not what Washington once described as the "thugs" of the PDF, but poor and mostly black Panamanians (see *In These Times*, Jan. 6), and they suffered the consequences. (Yesterday's PDF "thugs" have already been re-enlisted by the U.S. as the security forces of the regime of Guillermo Endara.)

The resistance by the poor led to systematic U.S. bombing and strafing of working-

class communities, leveling one neighborhood completely and displacing at least 13,000 people. On December 24, in one of the rare media reports on U.S. attacks on working-class resisters, the Associated Press described the conflict this way: "In the latest attempt to rout Noriega backers, an Air Force plane repeatedly bombed a hill-top position at 4 a.m. yesterday in the working-class district of San Miguelito.... Later yesterday, dozens of U.S. troops descended on the neighborhood, which has been the site of strong resistance."

Washington's devastating bombing attack on the densely populated working-class community of El Chorrillo, another nationalist stronghold, located near the Comandancia, Noriega's headquarters, accounted for hundreds of civilian deaths. The *New York Times*' Larry Rohter outdid even his Pentagon mentors by writing an article that ran on December 29 blaming the bombed-out houses on the resident resisters. According to Rohter's account, members of the Dignity Battalions started throwing grenades and burning their own neighbors' houses in punishment for welcoming the invading U.S. forces.

The Pentagon's own account of the U.S. operation in this working-class area directly contradicted the *Times*-Rohter version. Gen. Powell said on December 20, "There was heavy fighting in the vicinity of the Comandancia." And U.S. military officials acknowledged that ground forces were supported by Army and Air Force helicopter gunships and fighter aircraft.

Aside from the crude propaganda panegyrics of the media, it is clear that there was substantial popular opposition to the U.S. invasion and that the invading forces applied maximum force to crush it. Attempts to rewrite the story—to change resistance into a welcoming committee to fit the needs of a conquering army—were made to create the groundwork for future interventions: people everywhere are waiting for U.S. paratroopers to liberate them.

Yet, in one of the few instances where the *New York Times* reported on a response to the occupation by a Dignity Battalion member, it quoted a laborer who summed up the future this way: "We are not going to surrender.... We have to fight. Women have lost their husbands; children have lost their mothers. So we have to fight.... During the day I'm a friend of the American soldiers. At night, we're the enemy."

Myth four: The fourth argument was that the U.S. intervened just "to remove Gen. Noriega." If this were the case, why did U.S. forces heavily bomb the working-class neighborhoods? Why did they purge nationalist officers in the PDF? The U.S. did want to remove the general, but it also hoped to preserve those underlings and members of the PDF who would accept U.S. tutelage.

Washington's rejection of a "surgical strike" against Noriega was conditioned by a recognition that the problem was not merely one individual but a complex set of political interests and outlooks embedded in Panamanian political life, including the popular nationalism carried over from the rule of Gen. Omar Torrijos and embedded among the PDF. By terrorizing the population and bolstering the Endara regime, Washington hoped to secure an additional client for its Central America policy. Overthrowing Noriega was merely a means to that end.

Myth five: Both the Bush administration and the media emphasized the "terrorist"

nature of the Noriega regime, citing vigilante violence, the beating up of opposition figures and allegations of political homicides. The invasion was described as a means to end a "reign of terror." Yet the invading U.S. forces practiced terror on a much greater scale in a shorter timespan than anything that had occurred during the whole decade of Noriega's rule. With several thousand civilian casualties, at least 13,000 homeless, close to \$1 billion in property damage and more than 5,000 Panamanians arrested without specific charges, U.S. state terrorism clearly outstrips Noriega's local store-front variety by a considerable margin.

The U.S. substituted one kind of lawless terror for another, a point reinforced by its condemnation in all international organizations—including the formally U.S.-controlled Organization of American States (OAS). The use of what Cheney termed "maximum force" reflected Washington's recognition that the U.S. invasion would provoke popular opposition. The deliberate use of terror tactics was evident in the Stealth bomber's dropping of one-ton bombs in the vicinity of a supposed military target. Photographs in the *Times* of the mass roundup of civilian prisoners and their imprisonment in barbed-wire camps, and working-class houses—those left standing—riddled with bullet holes in the neighborhood of El Chorrillo, hardly fit the textual accounts celebrating the U.S.' version of a liberating army.

Myth six: In past invasions, as well as in the present one in Panama, Washington has commonly evoked the notion that its intervention is directed toward establishing law and order. What is clear in the aftermath of the U.S. invasion of Panama is the complete breakdown of law, order and any semblance of public institutions. The occupying U.S. military, which substituted itself for any and all Panamanian institutions, was ill-prepared for any government duties except that of seizing control. The massive sacking of stores that accompanied the U.S. invasion was a direct result of the previous months of economic strangulation engineered by Washington, which had forced down Panamanian living standards, especially among the urban poor.

The invasion was the first, but not the last, act against internationally recognized law. The U.S. military's forcible entry into the Nicaraguan ambassador's residence violated universally recognized laws of diplomatic sanctity; Washington's political pressures on the Vatican and the latter's capitulation in handing over Noriega violated the Vatican's own rules protecting political refugees seeking asylum. It is clear that Washington was concerned not with law and order in the abstract but with imposing its own "law" and establishing a political order compatible with U.S. hegemony in Panama.

With the active collaboration of Panama's upper-middle classes, the U.S. politico-military command has essentially taken control to refashion Panama's political system into an unconditional supporter of the Bush regime's regional policies. As in the case of Grenada, Washington can be expected to finance the reconstruction of a client military force and to provide funds for the business elite, while bypassing the disorder and chaos that it created among the lower classes.

Myth seven: The myth given widest circulation by the state and mass media was the notion that the U.S. invasion occurred at the behest of the democratically elected regime

of Endara. Yet a chronology of events suggests otherwise. The U.S. invasion of Panama took place without consulting Endara or any of his close associates. One reason may be that, at least according to some of Endara's ambiguous initial comments, he might have opposed it. In an interview printed in the December 24 *Inquirer* Endara said, "[The news of the U.S. invasion was] like a kick in the head. It was not the best thing, I would have thought. We were not really consulted.... I would have been happier without an intervention."

According to Endara, Bush informed him of the plans only two or three hours before the invasion. After agonizing for a few seconds, Endara, like a well-paid hooker, agreed to go along with the invasion and the occupation forces. "The gringos have their defects, but I am used to ... them," he told the *Inquirer*. Appropriately enough, Endara was installed as president at a U.S. military base, and his first orders were sent out on U.S. fax machines.

During the popular resistance, Endara was so conscious of his quisling-like behavior that he named a Cabinet and then declined to reveal its members' names. Any real power over Panama is exercised by Gen. Thurman. The screening and purging of the PDF and its reconstitution into the new security forces was controlled by Thurman; the decision to put Endara on television and to mobilize the public support and a show of legitimacy was organized by U.S. policymakers. Endara's subordination to his patrons in Washington is evidenced in the matter-of-fact way in which the U.S. simply grabbed Noriega and shipped him to Miami despite the fact that Panama does not have an extradition treaty with the U.S.

Like Noriega, the U.S. has marginalized a supposedly freely elected president. The fact that Endara accepts U.S. control and the trappings of power and rejects Noriega does not make the process and structure any more democratic.

Myth eight: Washington claims that the world welcomed the U.S. overthrow of Noriega and that the administration's actions were contributing to the global trend toward democracy.

But the Bush action was rejected throughout Latin America. In an unprecedented 20-to-1 vote, the OAS—which had functioned as a rubber stamp for past U.S. invasions—voted to condemn the action. Regimes across the political spectrum, from Chile's right-wing government to the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, joined in repudiating the invasion. Predictably, the U.S. clients in Central America followed their patron's lead: El Salvador was the only supporter of the U.S., while Honduras and Costa Rica abstained. In the U.N., the vote was equally lopsided; only the predictable Western European bloc plus Israel voted for the U.S.' armed invasion. The puppet nature of the Endara regime was so evident that the U.N. initially refused to seat it.

The military victory was costly diplomatically, yet the Bush administration is primarily concerned with its capacity to project military power, to incorporate another Central American regime into its regional strategy and to build a bipartisan consensus for the politics of military intervention in the Congress and the media. In this regard, Bush has succeeded; however, in succeeding, the administration has torn a considerable hole in the still-fresh notion that the East-West thaw is leading to a more peaceful world, one in which big-power restraint

Continued on page 22

EDITORIAL

BillDay Detroit Free Press
 Tribune Media Services



The invasion of Panama seen as the prerogative of a declining empire

Searching for precedents that would give the Bush administration the cover of law for its invasion of Panama, legal scholars have concluded that there are none—at least not since feudal times or earlier. But while there may be no precedents that satisfy current standards of international law, or that are consistent with United States treaty obligations as a member of the United Nations and the Organization of American States and a signatory of the Panama Canal treaties, the Bush administration is not alone in recent history in imposing its preferred ruler on a nation in its thrall. The most recent precedent occurred in 1968, when the Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia to overthrow Alexander Dubcek, who, the Soviets claimed, was threatening to undermine their security. And before that, in 1956, the Soviets also invaded Hungary to remove—and murder—Imre Nagy, who committed the crime of attempting to make Hungary a neutral state.

Then there is the precedent of Great Britain in the 19th century—when it had an empire, stretched around the world, on which the sun never set. Like our current leaders in Washington, the British didn't care much for international law. Indeed, in those glory days of empire they could be much more forthright in their dealings with "inferior" nations. So they invoked something they called the Law of Paramount Power, which meant they were stronger than local governments and could depose pesky local leaders at will.

And then there is the precedent of the Roman empire, which 2,000 years ago liked to bring defeated enemy leaders back to Rome to be

displayed in the circus in chains—much as Manuel Noriega was shackled in the hold of a C-130 and brought back to Miami to be put on display in our electronic circus.

While none of these historical precedents have standing in the law—at least not as law-abiding nations understand it—they do have some things in common with President Bush's "proudest hour." They were all actions of imperial powers defending their sway over less-powerful nations by brute force. And in the end such actions did more to generate hatred of the imperial powers—and to stiffen the will of subject populations to resist—than they did to stabilize their empires.

Neither the administration nor congressional leaders—much less the commercial media—seem concerned that while the Soviet Union allows its empire to dissolve peacefully, we revert to the despised and failed ways of the past. Nor do they seem to have considered that the example set by the invasion of Panama could be used to justify similar actions by others. Bruce Zagaris, chairman of the American Bar Association's panel on international criminal law, said that the administration's legal rationale for seizing Noriega is merely an afterthought, one that could be used as a justification by an unfriendly government for seizing former U.S. officials when they travel abroad.

But the administration believes—just as the Soviet Union and Britain did—that its military power can be used with impunity to intimidate any Third World country that would dare to act as if it were an equal of American imperial power. And for the moment, our arrogantly shortsighted leaders in Washington may be on safe ground. But this kind of old thinking is not only undemocratic and ugly; it is also dangerous. It is not the act of a self-confident imperial power in tune with the world it dominates. On the contrary, it is the panicky reaction of a president unable to face the possibility that he is presiding over a nation that may well be the last modern empire. And, as frequently happens in such situations, the refusal to let go peacefully may only hasten the isolation of our government and the class it represents.

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WILLIAM
DAY

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LETTERS

Bush and the law

IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE U.S. ATTACK ON PANAMA, various administration spokespeople and media commentators stated repeatedly that legal grounds for such an attack existed.

The alleged legal grounds were said to reside in the Panama Canal treaty and the charters of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United Nations.

A visit to the library, however, confirms the opposite is the case.

First, the Panama Canal treaty: in ratifying the treaty, the U.S. Senate appended a provision stating that while the U.S. had a right to take military action to defend the canal, such action "shall not have as its purpose nor be interpreted as a right of intervention in the internal affairs of the Republic of Panama."

Second, the OAS Charter: Article 17 states, "The territory of a state is inviolable; it may not be the object, even temporarily, of military occupation or of other measures of force taken by another state, directly or indirectly, on any grounds whatsoever."

Third, the U.N. Charter: Member nations agree to settle disputes peacefully, or else turn them over to a regional organization (like the OAS) or to the U.N. Security Council. The only exception (Article 51) provides for self-defense in case "an armed attack occurs against a member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security."

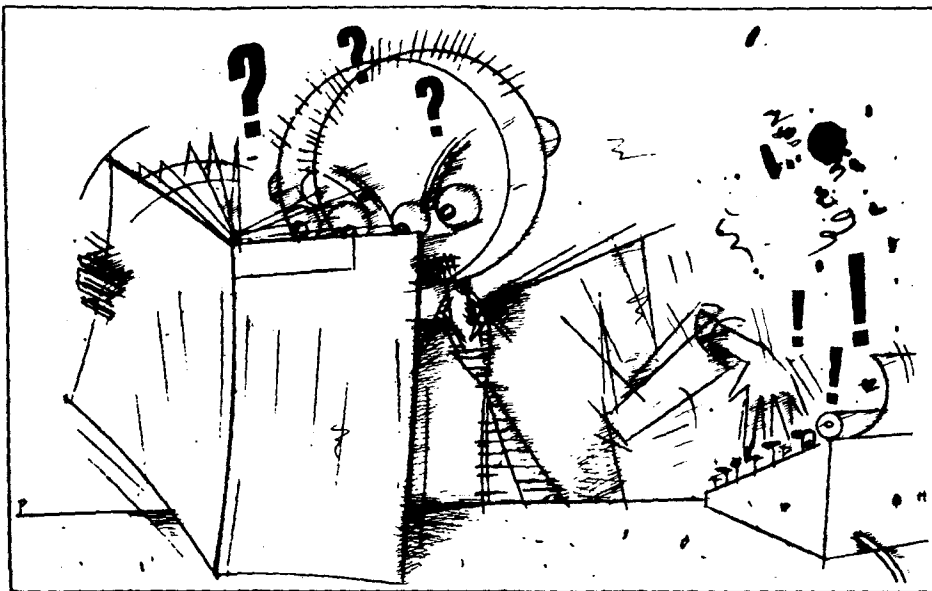
The Bush administration's invasion was not directed at protecting the canal, nor was it a defense response to an armed attack on the U.S. Clearly, then, it was illegal under the treaties cited.

Jonathan R. Ide
Madison, Wis.

Illusory miracle

IN HIS ARTICLE "LEFT COALITION PREPARES FOR Elections" (JTT, Nov. 15, 1989), Paul Little states that "Büchi and Errazuriz promise to build upon the so-called 'Chilean economic miracle' that the World Bank recently praised for maintaining an annual GNP growth rate of over 7 percent and keeping inflation at 17 percent, low by Latin American standards. During the past 16 years, Chile's economy has been guided by a group of young economists known as the 'Chicago boys.'" By following his first sentence with one that suggests a long time frame (16 years), Little seriously misleads *In These Times* readers. According to official Chilean statistics, between 1972 and 1987 per capita GNP in Chile fell 6.4 percent, while consumption per capita fell by a staggering 26 percent. A high growth rate for Chile is obtainable only by carefully selecting the years: i.e., starting at the bottom of the early '80s collapse. As JoAnn Wypijewski points out in "Shirley Christian and the Times on Chile" (*Lies of Our Times*, January 1990), "The greatest miracle of the Pinochet era has been the mass media's transformation of long-term absolute decline and ruthless degradation of living conditions into a 'positive legacy.'" It is regrettable that Paul Little falls into this trap in *In These Times*. (*Lies of Our Times* is a new monthly journal of media criticism, available from the Institute for Media Analysis, 145 W. 4th St., New York, NY 10012, for \$24 a year.)

Edward S. Herman
Penn Valley, Pa.



Health care

AS ONE OF MANY ON THE LEFT WATCHING WITH great interest as the current round in the U.S. national health-care debate heats up, I was glad to see the articles by Stephanie Wasserman and Michael Gray (JTT, Dec. 6, 1989). I'd like to add a couple of thoughts to theirs.

Wasserman uses the high incidence of mortality related to heart disease as a point supporting her argument about access limitations leading to deteriorating health status. Actually, rates of mortality caused by heart disease have been declining in this country for well over a decade. Most observers credit this to changes in lifestyle rather than medical interventions. More telling for her case is the continuing problem of high infant mortality, especially among blacks and Hispanics.

Wasserman explains that the reason the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union, OCAW, is supporting the proposal of Physicians for a National Health Program (PNHP) is that this is the only proposal for "fundamental change" in the medical-care system. What happened to the truly radical National Health Service proposal that Rep. Ron Dellums (D-CA) has been introducing in every legislative session since 1976? The PNHP proposal would turn the administration of health insurance over to government as a cost-saving measure but leave the practice of medicine intact and even less regulated than it is now. This doesn't strike me as "fundamental change."

On the other hand, the disheartening news about the failings of the British National Health Service reported in Gray's article, on top of the recent Medicare Catastrophic Care debacle, promises to haunt any efforts at true reform of the American medical-care system.

Donna Bird
Vernon, Conn.

Parliamentary democracy

LIKE MANY OTHER LEFTISTS, I WOULD LIKE TO SEE more equitable representation of popular interests in the U.S. and the possibility of bringing down a government that does not conform to its electorate's mandate. Surely if we can talk seriously of socialism in the U.S., then we can consider changing the party system as a step in the right direction. If we intend to accept, for lack of a realistic alternative, the Jeffersonian tradition of one slightly broader-based party of mild resistance to the ruling oligarchy's monopoly of power, there must be a way to consider a constitutional amendment allowing that "democratic opposition's" legislative majority to call elections and install a new executive.

None of the Eastern European countries is looking at a two-party presidential system in their radical moves away from politburo control. They're looking at the parliamentary systems of Sweden, Spain, Italy and West Germany. Why don't we?

Richard Stern
Ceraldo, Italy

Objectivity

YOUR LITTLE ARTICLE REGARDING BAD REPORTING (JTT, Dec. 13, 1989) did far more in support of objectivity than all the confidence of NBC News Vice President Tom Ross. If editors such as those behind NBC's *Today Show* have the power to determine what is and is not news, how can reporters such as Peter Karl, who did an exposé about General Electric, have freedom? Or does "freedom of the press" mean only editorial freedom—which sometimes translates into corporate protection?

We are not well served by those in the media whose skillful thinking, however professional, still keeps us from any genuine

thinking, however subversive. Journalism lacks integrity as long as the power it practices perverts the freedom it preaches.

L.S. Cattarini
Toronto

Defending the diaphragm

I WAS DISAPPOINTED IN KATHARINE GREIDER'S ARTICLE on birth control (JTT, Nov. 6, 1989). She dismissed the diaphragm and, by association, the cervical cap in an irresponsible manner. The personal testimony of one diaphragm user does not represent the experience of all potential female barrier-method users.

I doubt that you would print an article that examined options available to solve other world problems in such a flippant way. For example, do we dismiss the idea of using wind to generate electricity because it is an "old-fashioned" idea? Experimentation with older, tried and true ecologically sound ideas is quite popular with environmentalists. I wonder at the resounding "call" for more modern, more convenient methods of birth control when evidence points to the idea that nothing comes free of charge.

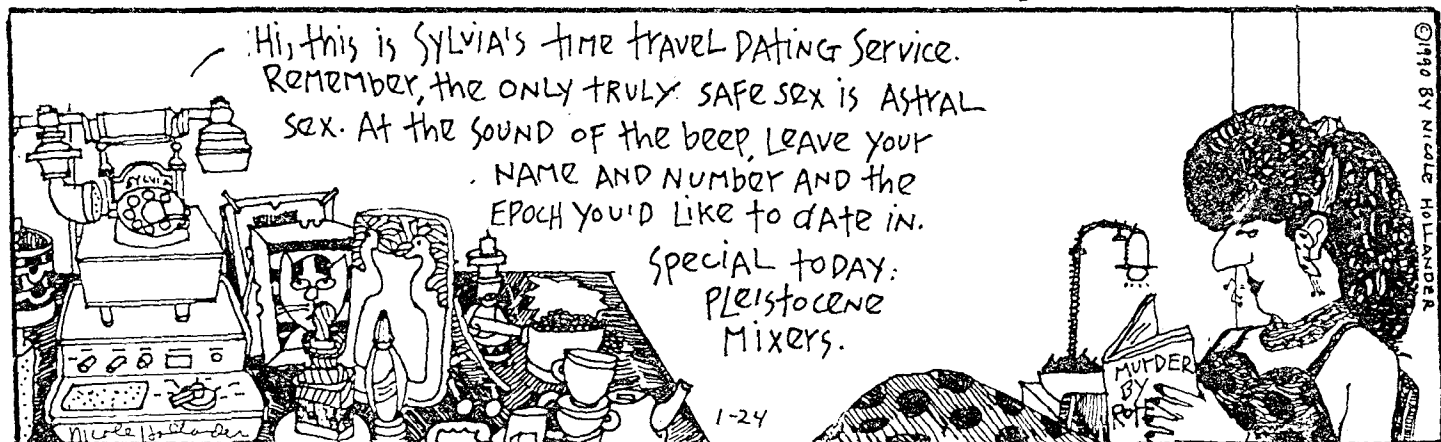
The modern "state of the art" contraception Greider is requesting will come as our current methods do, with a price tag, usually the woman's health and risk of serious, potentially fatal side effects.

Many possibilities exist for eliminating the objections to the barrier methods. Theories that the spermicide, which is the "messy" and distasteful component of this method, may not be necessary for contraceptive effectiveness remain theories rather than scientific evidence due to lack of research funding. Since no pharmaceutical company stands to profit from such research, the challenge falls to feminist health-care providers (like the Emma Goldman Clinic in Iowa City) who laboriously complied with the Federal Drug Administration to do studies of cervical-cap effectiveness and safety in order to make that an option for women in the U.S.

The cap and the diaphragm are old methods whose time has come. Many women question the "benefits outweigh the risks" rationale for recommending that women remain on the birth-control pill for their entire reproductive lives. Study after study shows that the risk of life-threatening side effects increases with age. With this kind of attitude on the part of our leaders in contraception research in this country, would you be willing to test the latest state-of-the-art contraception on your body? I feel you have helped perpetuate the expectation that contraception ought to be "easy."

Mary Ellen Huth
Health Educator, Emma Goldman
Clinic for Women, Iowa City, Iowa

SYLVIA



by Nicole Hollander

Verdict in political slayings holds implications for U.S.

By Daniel Junas

IN DECEMBER 1980, STEVE PSINAKIS, A leading Marcos opponent exiled in the U.S., met in New York with Imelda Marcos and got a warning from her. Ronald Reagan, the Marcos' friend, was in the White House, she told him. Now she and her husband Ferdinand would be able to strike back at their opponents in the U.S. Six months later, two Filipino-American anti-Marcos labor activists, Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes, were gunned down in their union hall in Seattle, Washington.

But last month, almost a decade later, a Seattle federal court jury found Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos liable for the deaths of Domingo and Viernes and awarded their families \$15.1 million.

The verdict is the first ever against a foreign dictator for crimes committed in office. But just as important as this historic legal precedent are the central political issues raised in the dramatic three-and-a-half-week trial: political repression in the U.S. and the tolerance of foreign intelligence apparatuses conducting covert operations—including murder—against U.S. citizens.

The Committee for Justice for Domingo and Viernes was formed in the immediate aftermath of the murders. Along with other Third World solidarity communities

targeted by the new Reagan administration, such as the Central America and Palestine solidarity movements, they began a process of self-education about the wave of surveillance and repression being initiated.

Eight and a half years later, their investigations into the murders and administration actions culminated at the Seattle trials.

Government documents uncovered in that investigation reveal that U.S. agencies were well aware of Marcos' illegal intelligence operation in the U.S. Indeed, in 1979 President Jimmy Carter's ambassador to

This Marcos case sets a precedent in international law.

the Philippines had warned Marcos that the illegal activities had to stop. Except for this warning, however, the U.S. government "made a conscious decision to look the other way," according to Michael Withey, the plaintiffs' lead attorney.

Originally the plaintiffs named the U.S. government as a defendant, but the judge, Barbara J. Rothstein, disallowed the case on grounds of national security.

But Judge Rothstein, a Carter appointee, did allow the plaintiffs to put the Marcos regime itself on trial, and their lawyers drew

a vivid connection between human-rights abuses in the Philippines and abuses committed by Marcos agents in the U.S. Raul Manglapus, currently the minister of foreign affairs of the Philippines, testified by video deposition about the abuses under Marcos' martial-law regime. And several witnesses, including Psinakis, testified about the surveillance and harassment they had endured in the U.S.

Since the plaintiffs were attempting to prove the existence of a broad conspiracy, they were even permitted to show the jury a videotape of the assassination of Benigno Aquino, the late husband of Philippine President Corazon Aquino.

Richard Hibey, the Marcos' Washington, D.C.-based defense attorney, argued that these events were unrelated to the murders of Domingo and Viernes. He contended that Domingo and Viernes were politically unimportant, that they had "toiled in a smaller vineyard," and hence were unlikely targets for Marcos.

Domingo and Viernes' political work, therefore, was a central issue in the trial. At the time of the murder, the two friends had recently risen to leadership positions in the International Longshore Workers' Union (ILWU) Local 37, representing the predominantly Filipino labor force of the Alaska fish canneries. In March 1981 Viernes had traveled to the Philippines, where he met with the leadership of the Philippines trade-union federation, the KMU, or May 1st Movement.

After leaving the Philippines, where Viernes believed he had been trailed by Mar-

cos' intelligence operatives, he met Domingo in Honolulu for the ILWU international convention. Viernes and Domingo got the convention to pass a resolution critical of Marcos' anti-labor decrees and authorizing an ILWU team to travel to the Philippines to investigate labor conditions.

As Richard Falk, an expert on international human-rights law, testified, Marcos was most concerned about the emergence of an independent trade-union movement in the Philippines. Since Marcos was also extremely sensitive to outside criticism of his labor practices, he would have feared the ILWU resolution. Domingo and Viernes were, Falk testified, "precisely the kind of targets the Marcos government selected" for summary execution.

The late dictator himself testified at the trial by way of a videotape deposition given in Hawaii after his downfall. Although Marcos denied having any particular interest in his opponents in the U.S., when asked about funding he may have provided for the Mabuhay Corporation, he pleaded the Fifth Amendment.

The Mabuhay Corporation, run by Marcos' close friend, San Francisco physician Leonilo Malabed, was a cover for the Marcos' intelligence operations in the U.S., according to expert witness Bonifacio Gillego. Gillego, a Philippines congressman and former Philippines intelligence operative, testified about a statement of expenses for the Mabuhay Corporation that the U.S. Customs Department seized from Marcos when he fled the Philippines. The statement revealed a payment of \$15,000 made on May 17, 1981, that, the plaintiffs argued, was paid to Constantine "Tony" Baruso, a Marcos loyalist and president of ILWU Local 37, to arrange the murder of Domingo and Viernes.

It is ironic that "mabuhay" is a toast meaning "long life," for on June 1, 1981, Domingo and Viernes were shot by an automatic weapon belonging to Baruso.

Reciprocity: The Domingo/Viernes case sets powerful precedents in international law. For the first time a former head of state was tried and found liable for crimes he committed in office. "If U.S. courts," Withey said after the trial, "accept as a principle Marcos' liability, then we as a country must accept as a legal principle that courts in Nicaragua and Chile can find U.S. rulers liable for actions in their country."

Just as important are the organizational precedents set by the Committee for Justice, led by Domingo's sister Cynthia. The work that made the trial possible was led and carried on primarily by women, a development, she said, that would have surprised and pleased her protective older brother. And the key to that work was building a broad, multiracial coalition.

"When I walked into that courtroom on the closing day," Cynthia Domingo recalled, "and I saw the multiracial character of the group that was there—Asians, Latinos, blacks, whites—that's what made me feel satisfied. Even if we would have not gotten the judgment, I would have felt good about the whole eight and a half years."

"When you say 'continuing Silme and Gene's work'—that's what it really meant."

Mabuhay Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes!

Daniel Junas is a freelance journalist based in Seattle.

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One Plus One: The Case for Two Germanies

The phone rang the other day in my motel in Aptos, California, and a woman with a German accent said she was called Carolyn and she worked for *Bunte*. I dimly remembered that *Bunte* was some kind of illustrated West German periodical. I asked Carolyn what she was after.

She explained that *Bunte* was looking for someone to write a "very controversial" article about the prospect of the unification of the Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic, otherwise known as East and West Germany. I asked her what exactly she meant by "controversial," which in the journalistic argot of the U.S. is normally used to refer to people, events or ideas the writer prefers not to discuss in detail, as in "the controversial ideas of Marquis de Sade."

It came back to me that *Bunte* was probably on the right-wing, rabble-rousing side of the ledger. Carolyn said that the editors of *Bunte* hoped this "controversial" article would assail the idea of unification on a no-holds-barred basis. I should not be afraid to evoke the specter of Nazism on the loose, or the horrors of the Third Reich. I said that as a matter of fact I was opposed to unification and would send something on the fax to *Bunte* HQ in Munich. She named a fee that was agreeable testimony to the strength of the Deutschmark and the West German economy. Here's what I sent *Bunte* a couple of days later:

After years of paying pious lip service to the idea of a united Germany, members of the North American elites—both liberal and conservative—are now sounding distinctly nervous about the possibility of actually existing reunification. Arthur Schlesinger Jr. is one of America's best-known historians. He also served in the Kennedy White House, and still speaks for an important current in the Democratic Party. Writing in the *Wall Street Journal* just before Christmas, Schlesinger wrote: "By the turn of the century, a unified Germany, the most powerful and dynamic state in Europe, may be demanding *Lebensraum*—a revision of its eastern borders, a new *Anschluss* with Austria, a new outreach to German-speaking minorities in neighboring countries."

German historians, Schlesinger remarked, "are trying to dodge German responsibility for Nazism by blaming it all on Stalin. New German generations, feeling no personal guilt about Nazism, may well nurse a desire for national vindication.... Germany could have by far the largest army in Europe west of Russia. With its technological skills, it may even acquire nuclear weapons. Overwhelming military power would be bound to reinforce both the will and the ability to dominate Europe by any means."

Some important conservative journalists, such as William Safire, formerly Richard Nixon's speechwriter and now a columnist for the *New York Times* and spokesman for the Republican right, are saying the same sort of thing. These people do not oppose unification. They see it as inevitable but now concentrate all their hopes in seeking to ensure, like Secretary of State James Baker, that a unified Germany would remain securely in NATO, welded at the hip to U.S. geopolitical imperatives.

Of course, it is beginning to dawn on

ASHES & DIAMONDS

By Alexander Cockburn

these commentators that the arrival of the third Christian millennium may see the U.S. in poor geo-strategic shape, facing two great trading blocs dominated by the Deutschmark and the Japanese yen. It is therefore very likely that horror scenarios about German revanchism, of the sort articulated by Schlesinger, will become increasingly familiar. Already there are some veterans, of the generation horrified by President Reagan's famous trip to Bitburg, who are saying that they did not fight World War II to see the day when Chancellor Kohl would refuse to reassure the Poles that a unified Germany would accept present borders. The U.S. press has given plenty of space to the Republicans and to the SS antecedents of the party's leader. Germans can expect much more of the same if the U.S. feels itself slipping (as it surely will) in influence and economic clout this side of the Atlantic.

As a member of the left, I do not have much sympathy with these lurid fantasies about a Fifth Reich now beginning to be inscribed on the American political imagination. Most of them do not stem from any coherent political morality. The people talking about German revanchism and expansionism are often the same as those cheering on the U.S. invasion of Panama and calling for a crushing of the Sandinistas. At some deep unconscious level, many of them share Ronald Reagan's retrospective wish-fulfillment, celebrated at Bitburg, that somehow in World War II the real fight was between North American and German defenders of European ideals against the Bolshevik scum.

At the age of 48, I am a member of the last age cohort to have been directly affected by World War II and to have faint memories of it. As a very small child, I sheltered in the London underground tunnels from the Luftwaffe's blitz. My family's house in London was destroyed by a V-2 rocket. My father, as a Communist journalist, was on the Nazi death list, prepared in the event of invasion in 1940. Much of the reading of my youth was about the war.

This early conditioning does not mean that I oppose German reunification because I fear that once again there may be a *Drang nach Osten*, Nazism reborn, a recycling of history. But even without recourse to these lurid fantasies it is sensible to be opposed to unification, which I am. Many socialists in the West feel that it is more or less inevitable that the power of West German capital will overwhelm all obstructions, that eastern Europe will become a resource base,

with a well-trained and cheap infrastructure furnishing a crucial asset for the big combines based in the Federal Republic. With the Democratic Republic swallowed up, so this argument goes, Eastern Europe—Czechoslovakia and other relics of the Warsaw Pact—will soon become de facto appendages of the new German corpus. The final logic of this trend is already being spelled out in Poland, where the economists of Solidarity are already committing economic hari kiri—mass unemployment, privatization of all public structures—in an effort to please the Western banks and the International Monetary Fund.

So the socialists oppose unification, but like Schlesinger they think that de facto it is a reality. Their hope is that somehow the political complexion of a united Germany would be social democratic. This seems to me to be both too pessimistic and too optimistic at the same time. First, I must say that the decisions on unification will most certainly be made not by journalists in the United States but by the masses in the Democratic Republic. Second, it is obvious that a measure of de facto unification is taking place, and indeed took place a long time ago. The U.S. geo-strategists suddenly worried about the power of a unified Germany do not seem to be aware of the extent of the already-existing complementarity. Swing credits from the Federal Republic have been most important to the Democratic Republic, and the Federal Republic has been very grateful for the markets in which to dump its surplus.

But I personally believe that if the visions of a unified social democratic Germany are unrealistic, the staying power of a social democratic East Germany is probably underestimated in the United States, where the Democratic Republic has always been caricatured in particularly violent Cold War terms. The *New York Times* runs endless stories about the economic disintegration of the Democratic Republic and then, with no sense of irony, prints a report from a well-satisfied collective farm. West Germany has one of the lowest rates of female participation in the labor market (a sure sign of slack in the economy), while East Germany has one of the highest.

Why destroy the achievements of the

Democratic Republic just at the moment when the vices are being purged amid signs of invigoration of the democratic credibility of the East German state? Those people who have gone West in recent weeks, as over the years, can join the "elbows out" society and will no doubt vote for Helmut Kohl later this year. Those who stay behind and those who join them can push forward, with renewed confidence, in the construction of eco-socialism.

I say this as someone who has lived in the United States for 17 years but who is Irish by nationality and who grew up in the Irish Republic. Ever since the war, Irish people have been leaving for Britain and for the U.S. in numbers ranging annually between 30,000 and 100,000. (And these people seeking jobs on building sites in London or Boston were not offered a guaranteed job, housing or stipend, as were the East Germans.) But this does not mean that the Irish Republic is somehow politically or economically invalid. The Irish Republic has to struggle to make a just society, respectful of people and the environment, while also recognizing that its neighbor, Britain, will always be an immense factor in its economic calculations, as—to an increasing degree—is the EEC.

And here we come to one of the fundamental arguments against German unification. Why dream of the antique notion of a 19th-century state, with dominant metropolis in Berlin and subordinated regions where the provincials, as Heine once joked about France, have the distance to the capital etched in kilometers on their foreheads? The future of Europe, as Gorbachov has said, lies no longer with the closed national economies but with increasingly open structures. As Gorbachov recently emphasized in Rome, this does not mean surrender of all political economies to capitalist rationales.

The Polish working class will soon find out that "freedom" can mean the freedom not to have a job for the rest of your life. As a socialist, I say that the Democratic Republic has the chance to demonstrate what a humane, democratic socialism of the third millennium can be. Why destroy the chances for this dialectic by merging two states that have traveled already so far along different paths? Let's have complementarity, not unification. ■

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By David Volpendesta

Translating the political Cortázar

TRANSLATORS ARE GENERALLY consigned to the lower echelons of the literary hierarchy. Kathleen Weaver, who has translated Omar Cabezas' best-selling *Fire from the Mountain* has received widespread critical acclaim for her work on that book. She, however, isn't as concerned with her literary status as she is with the broader dimensions of the works she brings over into her native language—although, as a member of the American Literary Translators Association, she decries the low wages and lack of recognition that most translators receive.

On a chilly afternoon in Berkeley, Calif., Weaver explained those dimensions in the context of her most recent translation, Julio Cortázar's *Nicaraguan Sketches*. "My motivation for translating this book was political," she says. "I was concerned that this book be available to North American readers so that they would understand more of what was going on in Nicaragua. My motivation was similar to Cortázar's in writing it, in that he felt tremendous indignation about the contra war and also tremendous affection for Nicaragua."

Safe literary image: Translators and writers are inherently co-conspirators, and when the work being translated is in political opposition to official government policies, this relationship is intensified. For Weaver,

part of the task of translating *Nicaraguan Sketches* was not only discovering Cortázar's voice and internalizing it in order to capture its equivalent tones and nuances in English, but also to expand the com-

LITERATURE

mon North American perception of Cortázar as a highly Europeanized writer, more attuned to French surrealism than Latin American liberation struggles.

This safe, literary image has its roots in Cortázar's personal history. Born in 1912 in Brussels, where his father was an Argentine diplomat, he returned to Argentina when he was four and lived near Buenos Aires, one of Latin America's most European cities. In 1951, he departed for Paris, where he resided as a U.N. interpreter for more than 30 years.

Physical distance from Latin America, however, did not stifle his outspoken support for that region's struggles for independence from U.S. domination. "Cortázar arrived at this position gradually," Weaver points out in her introduction to *Nicaraguan Sketches*, "by a paradoxical cir-

cumnavigation: he approached Latin America by moving away from it, to Europe. As Eduardo Galeano writes in his trilogy *Memories of Fire*, Cortázar went forward by going back. 'He went from the end toward the beginning; from discouragement to enthusiasm, from indifference to passion, from solitude to solidarity.'"

Although a socialist, Cortázar held that it was exigent to maintain a critical perspective in order to enhance socialism's evolution. An early supporter of the Cuban revolution, he did not hesitate to criticize Cuba over the now-famous incarceration of Cuban poet Humberto Padilla.

Wheat and chaff: But in contrast to two other prominent Latin American writers—Mexico's Octavio Paz and Peru's Mario Vargas Llosa, who broke with Cuba over the "Padilla affair" and have gravitated toward positions compatible with the U.S. State Department objectives—Cortázar never totally severed his relationship to Cuba. In fact, after the affair, Cortázar frequently traveled there.

Moreover, in his essay "The Idiot," originally included in the Spanish-language edition of *Nicaraguan Sketches* (Munchnik Editions, Bar-

celona), but which doesn't appear as one of the 15 essays in Weaver's translation because it's thematically tangential to Nicaragua, Cortázar wrote: "If the Padilla case served any useful purpose, it was to separate the wheat from the chaff among critics outside of Cuba, for the criticism split into two tendencies: one in support of the socialist project and the other against it."

Later on in the same essay Cortázar wrote: "My criticism, however much in solidarity it may have been, cost me seven years of silence and absence from Cuba.... The critics in opposition to [Cuban] socialism cling to every negative incident and every hostile generalization their rhetoric can devise.... These critics have been stuck in a permanent denunciation of a transitory situation; its periodic reiteration has become mechanized: denounce a violation real or not ... and from that position launch a monotonous escalation of the denunciation until it finally covers everything Cuban, because that is socialism in progress and the goal is to destroy that endeavor."

Weaver takes pleasure in the fact that *Nicaraguan Sketches*, Cortázar's 12th book to be published in English, will serve to highlight his social and political involvement with Latin America. Yet she doesn't let her enthusiasm for the book, whose proceeds Cortázar donated to the Sandinistas when it was published in Managua shortly before his death from leukemia in 1984, blur her perspective of its relationship to the rest of his writings.

"Cortázar is a writer whose significance is not in one individual masterpiece like *Hopscotch*," she says. "His significance is in the entirety of his work and the vision that emerges from that. It's a particular type of questing, with tremendous values set upon freedom—literary free-

Julio Cortázar is perceived as a Europeanized writer, more attuned to French surrealism than Latin American struggles.

dom, especially the experimental use of language and the reveling in thought. This was something alien to any party-line position. He was a person who could never be a party hack.... He always defended the freedom of the artist, the freedom to simply pursue a vision, but at the same time calling on the artist to be socially and politically responsive to the poor.

"I think that's a side to Cortázar that up until now his published works have not given us. Much of

his political activism was done in various forums, in conferences, in journalistic writings and manifestos and in letters of protest, particularly in relation to Pinochet in Chile and the military dictatorship in Argentina. We don't hear anything about that in this country. These are not usually the things that get translated. So the fact that he was able to collect his political writings into a book has given us a chance to know this side of his personality. And I think it heightens his stature, not necessarily as a writer but as a human being."

A special feeling: Unlike most professional translators, who would use a book by Cortázar as an entree toward a more lucrative and high-profile career, Weaver, who was an editor and translator of the highly acclaimed *Penguin Book of Women Poets*, prefers to follow her heart.

"I don't do well as a translator on works for hire, where it's just a matter of a commercial relationship," she says. "I have observed that my work is mediocre if I'm not committed to the writer and don't have a special feeling about wanting to share their work with an English-speaking audience."

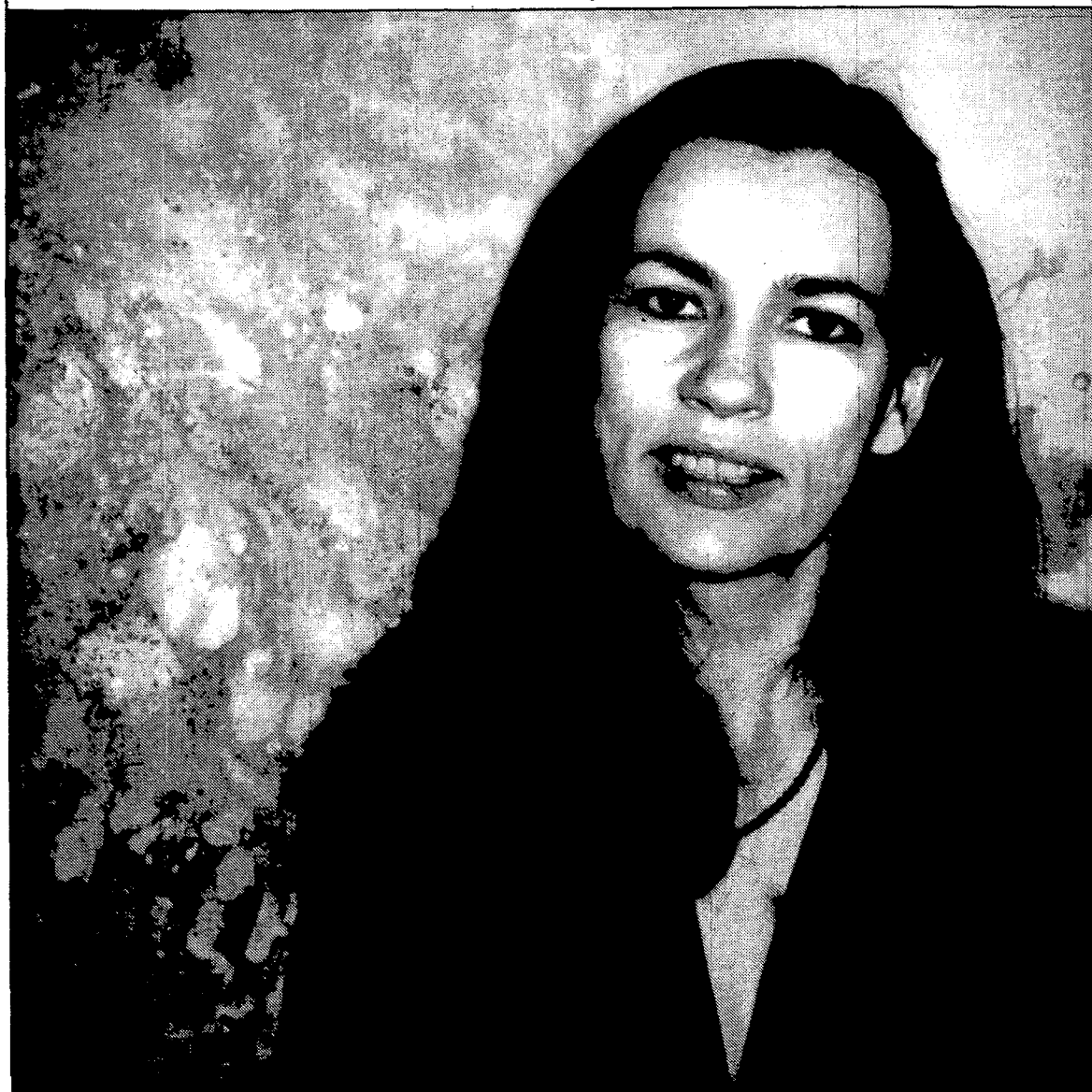
Currently Weaver has two works in progress she's eager to share with North American readers. One, an anthology of Cuban poetry, has been a long-term project that was sidetracked when she was so taken with the work of one of the poets, Nancy Morejón, that she took time out to translate her critically acclaimed book *Where the Island Sleeps Like a Wing*.

Weaver's other project, a book of translations by the recently deceased Peruvian poet Magda Portal, is her overriding preoccupation at the moment. "Magda Portal was a genuine revolutionary," Weaver says. "She was completely given over to improving the lives of the workers, campesinos and Indians in Peru.... To my mind she's most important not for any poem or book of poems but, like Cortázar, for her whole vision both as a writer and as a human being. She had a tremendous optimism and a sense of the tragedy of Latin America. But she never lost her optimism."

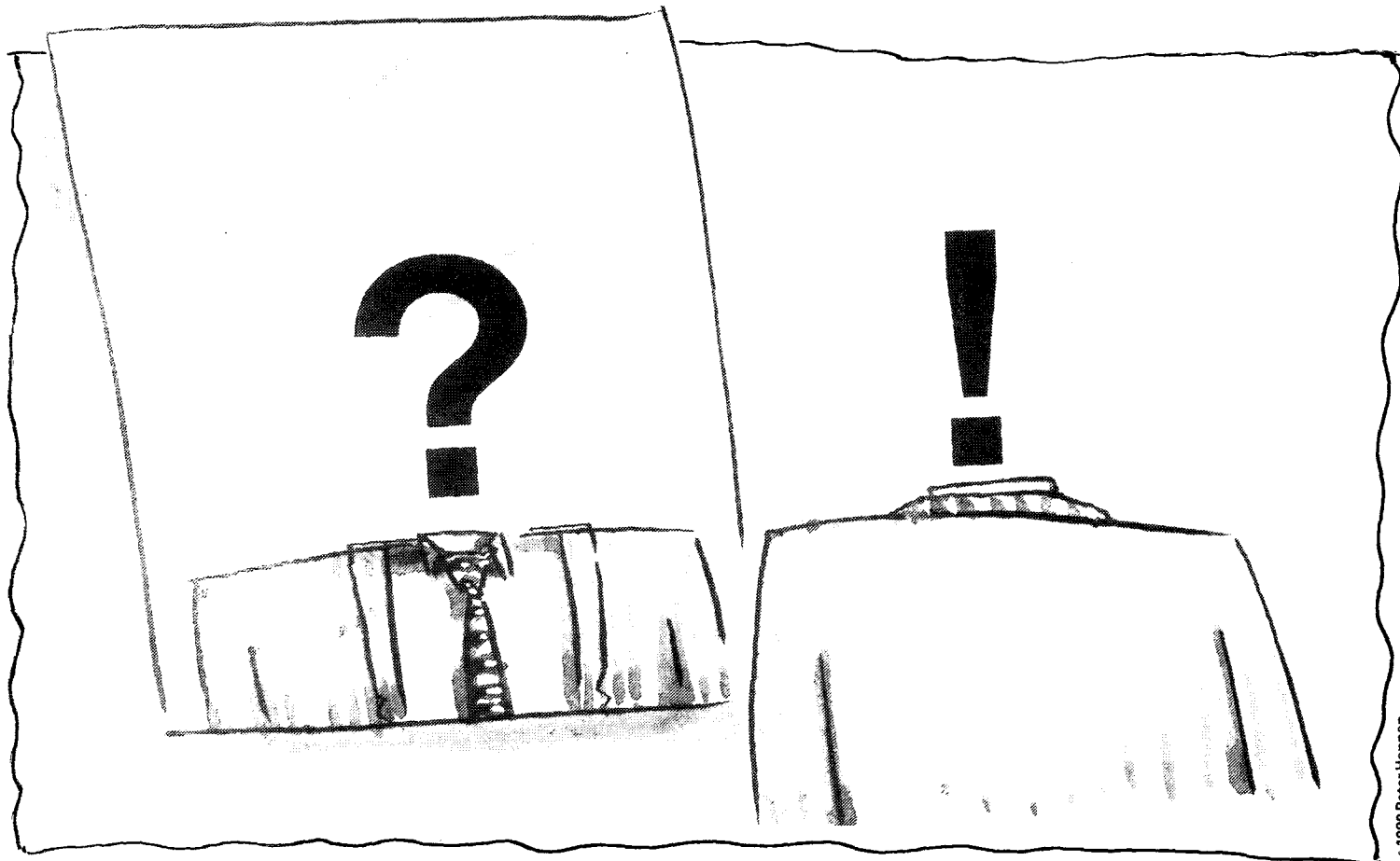
Weaver's optimism, like Portal's, intersects with the integrity of her political vision and an artistic sensibility based upon a commitment to transform the world. One of her greatest joys as a translator is to discover unknown voices and give them resonance. And that, rather than a safe, conventional career, is worth far more to her than the remuneration and kudos that come to those whose prestigious positions are contingent upon maintaining the literary and political status quo. ■

David Volpendesta is the co-editor of a collection of Central American short stories, *Clamor of Innocence* (City Lights) and the forthcoming *Homeless, Not Helpless* (Canterbury Press).

Translator Kathleen Weaver makes sure that an author's magic isn't lost in translation.



Bob Baldock



The Resurgent Liberal and Other Unfashionable Prophecies
By Robert B. Reich
Times Books, 303 pp., \$19.95

By Julia Bogardus

Platitudes and attitudes on the road to liberal resurgence

WHERE WE ARE AND WHERE we're going will no doubt provide Americans with ample food for thought well into the new decade. And how could it not: the hard legacies of Reaganism, with its peculiar blend of white mischief and benign neglect, certainly invite such speculation. The '80s have been difficult years for many, and even those favored by the conservative ascendancy seem restless, looking for new answers, looking again at old questions.

To the extent that many of these seekers perceive the delusions in the conservative parable—in the ceaseless insistence on discipline and fortitude, the unbending faith in the humane nature of the free market, the social Darwinism only thinly veiled—none will quarrel with Robert Reich's latest collection of essays. To the extent, though, that liberalism has failed in recent years to provide a more persuasive or relevant parable of its own, *The Resurgent Liberal* becomes part of the problem: the vision thing just isn't there.

Turning Japanese: The essays, written at various stopping places in the '80s and published in some number previously, roam across considerable territory, from education to trade policy, from the Japanese workplace to "The Day I Became a Feminist." They are, at intervals, deeply serious and tongue-in-cheek, intent and quite casual.

For example, in "Whose Cars?" Reich's careful examination of the Chevrolet Sprint—that hybrid of a 1983 trade agreement between Toyota and GM which put front-wheel drive and a Chevy label on

Toyota's Corolla, made in California—leads us right to the heart of what Reich fears will be America's downfall in the '90s. That is, while we fret over economies of scale, worriedly tallying cars made and sold,

POLITICS

the Japanese are busy securing the global economy's "highest value portions," storing up the know-how that the future's knowledge-intensive marketplace will value.

But then there are little puffballs like "When the Women Returned Home," a kind of silly peep into the crystal ball in which an unnamed reporter looks back on the '90s and the failure of the career woman, citing experts with names like Dr. Rex Tyrannous and day-care chains called Toddlers-R-Us. The mix of essays can be uncomfortable, and one wanders through it quizzically.

And where the resurgent liberal? What does this character look like? The picture is a bit fuzzy. He or she believes in "communitarian" values, understanding that "the politics of class only cuts us off from one another" and that "direct appeals to class consciousness have never gained much political currency in America." The resurgent liberal sees that management science as we understand it today demoralizes and devalues workers; looking to the Japanese for inspiration, it seems that America must invest in its workers, assuring them "a direct stake in future productivity."

The resurgent liberal sees that "paper entrepreneurs" do little to enlarge the economic pie but merely "arrange and define the slices,"

mainly to their own advantage; so the resurgent liberal despises leveraged buyouts, corporate raids and, in general, the mentality that sees no farther than the bottom line.

Cold, cruel world: There is a distinctly pie-in-the-sky aspect to this resurgence, a kind of wishful feeling that is, to say the least, unsettling. That is, it's all very well to talk about "communitarian values," but what does that really mean to anyone who is overextended and underpaid? It all has the unmistakable odor of the academy; Reich is quick to criticize the liberalism of the '60s and '70s as an "anomaly," "disconcertingly naive in a world grown colder and crueler." But what does he think communitarian values are in that same world? Kinder? Gentler?

Equally wishful is Reich's advocacy, which runs throughout the es-

says, of what he calls "collective entrepreneurship," that process by which workers, empowered and emboldened by generous, supportive, communitarian corporate bosses, come to stand united with their employers as a company "team." Some people on the team know a lot about

There is a distinctly pie-in-the-sky aspect to this resurgence.

production, some about marketing, some about technology; together, as a mass of creative energy, they are invincible. Look at the Japanese, Reich urges, it works for them: they don't even have a word for "management."

But idealism and sheer hope aside, is this really a solution for corporate woes in a country that put Lee Iacocca on the bestseller list and believed Donald Trump when he told us that the deal was an art? For better or for worse, we like our entrepreneurs renegade, not collective.

Certainly, much suggests that we need a liberal resurgence: one look at a campaign where even the Democrats ashamedly dodged the "L word" confirms what appear to be dire straits. This is, perhaps, the real strength of *The Resurgent Liberal*. Reich's summary of attitudes and policies that shaped the '80s (and will cast their shadow over the '90s if we let them) is as clear and cogent as any I've read. Then, too, the liberal instinct is far from dead in this country, where elections in recent months seem to indicate some swing leftward, or perhaps just a groggy awakening after a long nap.

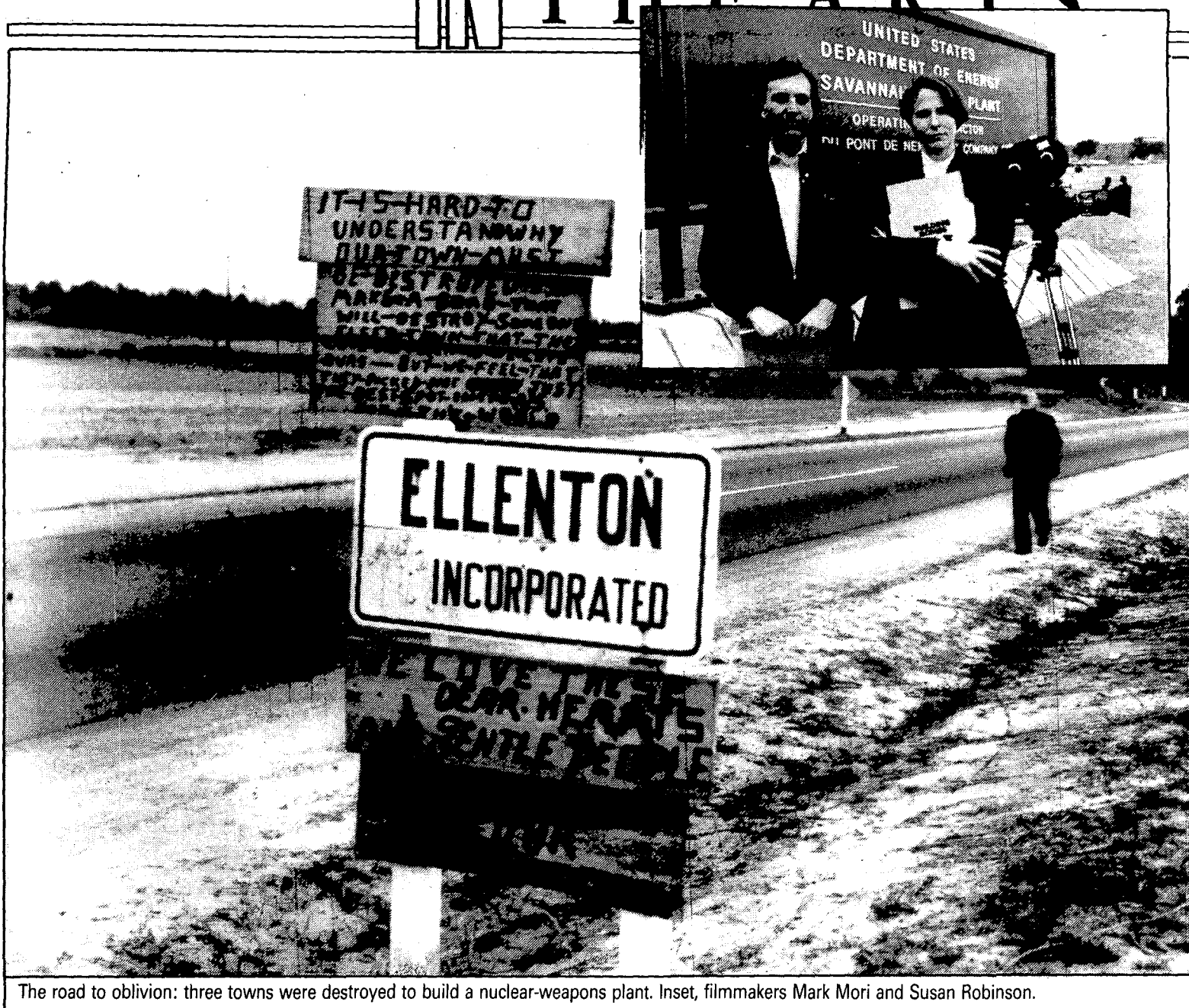
But where political liberalism has failed us in the '80s, *The Resurgent Liberal* does no better. For it is, in the end, less liberalism that needs revitalization in the new decade than the liberal agenda. Where is the clear program, the national strategy that can stand up to the now-familiar conservative accusations? (The litany ranges from fragmentary special-interest favoritism to general wimpiness.) Liberalism needs to reclaim a following from the middle class, from minorities, from all who would in fact benefit from the spirit of communitarianism in national policy but who need...well, they need the policy.

In his introduction, Reich pauses to dedicate this most recent work to what might be called the children of Reaganism: Michael Deaver and Ivan Boesky, Oliver North and Donald Trump, George Bush and George Steinbrenner. Out of their "stout conviction and audacious conduct," and, surely, out of the black hole that they have left in the center of any liberal conception of America, rises *The Resurgent Liberal and Other Unfashionable Prophecies*. Unfortunately, no sooner risen, it seems to vanish into thin air.

Julia Bogardus is a writer living in Chicago.



IN THE ARTS



The road to oblivion: three towns were destroyed to build a nuclear-weapons plant. Inset, filmmakers Mark Mori and Susan Robinson.

Dr. Lawless and those cardboard boxes," says Robinson. "But we felt that personal responsibility, political ideology and history all came together in this story, and we wanted to tell the whole thing. Becoming politically aware and active is a developmental process, and we believed that if we could tell the stories of these men and the changes they made in their lives, they would serve as role models."

Cardboard containment: Robinson and Mori began compiling research materials, photographs, film footage and interviews about a wide range of topics pertaining to the bomb plant. They unearthed archival footage of cardboard boxes labeled "Radioactive Waste" being tossed into pits in the burial ground. They filmed a pro-nuclear rally in 1984 where former Secretary of Energy James Edwards delivered a speech about the economic benefits of the nuclear industry. And they interviewed workers and family members about working conditions at the plant, the region's mounting health problems and life in the company town.

"We tried to design the film for people who aren't necessarily sensitive to these issues," says Mori. "People expect *Building Bombs* to be a regular anti-nuclear film, but we wanted to make it more than that. We wanted to look at the lives of the human beings who work in the nuclear industry."

Not that *Building Bombs* skimps on information about the Savannah River Plant or its role in the arms race. But its litany of mismanagement and impending doom is softened by the filmmakers' empathy for the people whose lives have been affected by the bomb plant. (For information on rental or purchase of *Building Bombs*, write Box 5202, Station E, Atlanta, GA 30307.)

As the film begins, narrator Jane Alexander describes the growth of the nuclear industry in South Carolina. In 1950, the Atomic Energy Commission selected the region near rural Ellenton, S.C., as the ideal location for manufacturing plutonium and tritium. The U.S. government relocated more than 6,000 residents to clear a vast tract of land. Three towns were demolished to make room for the bomb plant, which encompasses some 300 square miles of land in three counties.

"But with destruction came prosperity," recounts Alexander. The Savannah River Plant was one of the largest construction projects in modern history. More than 200 miles of highway wind through the five-reactor complex, which currently employs about 15,000 workers.

Cashing in: *Building Bombs* makes it clear that the nuclear industry bought its way into South Carolina with a promise of prosperity. "Over \$30 billion has been brought into South Carolina as a result of the nu-

The inner life of the deadly machine

Building Bombs

Produced and directed by Mark Mori and Susan Robinson

By Helen Shortal

BUILDING BOMBS IS MAKING NEWS. Both CNN and *NBC News Tonight* have broadcast footage from the one-hour documentary that examines the human cost of nuclear-weapons production at the Savannah River Plant in Aiken, S.C.

Even MTV has taken notice of the film, since *Building Bombs* has been promoted by rock musicians such as Michael Stipe of R.E.M. and Dave Wakeling of the now-defunct General Public. When MTV learned that Wakeling would be on hand for the film's premiere in Washington, D.C., the network dispatched a video crew to the Biograph Theater in Georgetown. A segment featuring interviews with Wakeling and Atlanta-based filmmaker Mark Mori along with the music of R.E.M. was later shown on MTV.

The five-year effort to produce and distribute *Building Bombs* began in 1984 when Mori and two friends decided to film a peace demonstration near the mammoth weapons complex. The ad hoc film crew paid a visit to anti-nuclear activists who

were living at a peace encampment near the Savannah River Plant. "We just started shooting protesters," says Mori. "But then we met Arthur Dexter and Bill Lawless."

Both Dexter and Lawless had worked at "the bomb plant," as it is known to local residents. And both men recounted highly personal tales of their disillusionment with the nuclear industry.

Lawless and principled: Lawless, a former Department of Energy investigator, was sent to the Savannah River Plant to assess the amount of radioactive waste buried in the South Carolina soil. He submitted a report that detailed the widespread contamination and serious hazards at the plant. And DuPont de Nemours & Co., which managed the plant until last year, pressured him to retract his findings. Lawless became the first Department of Energy official to testify about the bomb plant's hazardous conditions.

Of the many horror stories Lawless told, the one that received the most attention concerned the disposal of low-level radioactive materials at the plant: objects contaminated with radioactivity were placed in cardboard boxes and buried in pits. The 192-acre burial ground at the plant contained everything from protective gloves to bulldozers. And

the boxes were caving in, contaminating the soil and the groundwater with radioactivity.

Arthur Dexter was a former physicist at the plant. Ironically, he had gone to work at the bomb plant to

FILM

avoid fighting in the Korean War; only DuPont had the power to exempt Dexter from the draft. His new job, testing the movement of gases through various materials, "seemed quite innocent at the time," says Dexter in the film. "Only later did I realize I was working on weapons."

As the years passed, Dexter became uncomfortable with the stockpiling he observed at the bomb plant, which housed enough plutonium and tritium to manufacture 30,000 bombs like the one dropped on Nagasaki. "It seemed rather obscene," he says. After Dexter stopped working at the plant he became involved with the Aiken Peace Movement and with Warhead Watch, a group that tracks nuclear weapons transported on public highways.

As Mori interviewed the pair of Savannah River Plant insiders, he began to envision a different kind of protest film. *Building Bombs* would focus on life inside the bomb plant

rather than rail against the hazards and abuses of the nuclear industry.

During 1985, Mori met his future partner, Susan Robinson, at Atlanta's IMAGE Film/Video Center for independent film and video artists. A producer of interactive projects and corporate videos, Robinson had a background in instructional design—and a strong interest in environmental issues. She had attended her first demonstration at the Savannah River Plant when she was 16.

But neither Mori nor Robinson had produced a feature-length film before. "We were first-time filmmakers, and everyone told us to just make a simple exposé—the story of

"We wanted to look at the lives of the human beings who work in the nuclear industry," says Mark Mori.

ear industry," exhorts Edwards at the pro-nuclear rally. "That's big money.... We talk about all the problems that nuclear brings, but \$5 million has been spent just on monitoring this area."

Nowadays, money buys silence from the people who operate the bomb plant—and live in its shadow. A housewife interviewed in *Building Bombs* says that Aiken residents won't petition for a health study of the local population, even though "it seems like too much of a coincidence when you have four or five people in the same block dying of cancer." She says people are afraid of losing their jobs or their pensions.

The filmmakers got a firsthand look at the business of building bombs when they received permission to shoot inside the enormous complex. Working under constant supervision, their volunteer crews filmed the remote-controlled processes used to produce plutonium and tritium. When the crew moved outside to shoot the burial ground, they were given protective booties to wear. "The soil in the burial ground is radioactive," says Mori. "All of our shots had to be hand-held. We couldn't even put our tripod on the ground."

Building Bombs mixes hard facts

about the irresponsible dumping of radioactive chemicals with anecdotes that are no less thrilling. DuPont officials discovered that the turtles that swam in these "seepage basins" had become contaminated by radiation, so plant workers combed the surrounding streams and woodlands in an attempt to contain the turtle-powered migration of highly radioactive strontium-90.

"We've uncovered some things in this film that still haven't gotten into the mainstream media," says Robinson. A "deep throat" source at the plant informed the filmmakers that the concrete floors are disintegrating in the Canyon Buildings, where plutonium and tritium are extracted from fuel rods. Thirty-five years of bombardment by radiation is turning the floors into sponge. While Westinghouse, which currently manages the plant, has made no response to this allegation, Robinson believes that this silence constitutes assent. "We've shown the film in Aiken," she says, "and none of the facts have been refuted."

There's a dark humor in *Building Bombs* that arises from pointing out the gap between rhetoric and reality at the Savannah River Plant. When plant officials were warned that radioactive wastes might spread beyond

the burial ground, for example, "DuPont stated that the radioactivity was so low that it would never outcrop," recounts Alexander. "The first outcrop occurred in 1978, one year later." At the Biograph screening of *Building Bombs* an explosion of laughter greeted a confession by nuke-happy Secretary of Energy Edwards that "I'm a sort of environmentalist myself."

Rethinking the unthinkable: Robinson and Mori met with initial resistance when they tried to arrange a screening in Aiken. But when they did succeed in scheduling the film, the South Carolina premiere of *Building Bombs* was the lead item on the local news for two days. A plant worker informed Greenpeace that Westinghouse issued a memo to advise its 15,000 employees that the film would be screened in Aiken. Mori believes the memo was intended to spur a show of company solidarity at the screenings.

More than 600 people attended screenings of *Building Bombs* in Aiken and nearby Augusta, Ga. Many of them were workers from the Savannah River Plant. "People were pretty hostile going into the screening," says Mori. "But there were people in the film that they lived and worked with—people that spoke their language. It affected them.

When they left the screening, a lot of people said they needed to think about what we're doing at the Savannah River Plant."

"The most difficult part of getting the film out was raising the money—convincing people that the film needed to be made," says Mori. "We started working on *Building Bombs* before it was popular to criticize the nuclear industry. We were actually filming at the Savannah River Plant when Chernobyl happened. We'd been there getting a shot to show there was no containment dome [above the reactor]. We were driving home that night, and we heard over the radio that there'd been a big release of radiation."

Not surprisingly, fundraising became easier after the April 1986 accident at Chernobyl released 50 billion curies of radiation into the atmosphere. Now that *Building Bombs* is finished, Robinson and Mori are raising money to promote the film and court a distributor. During the past year the pair has raised about \$20,000 to finance trips to film festivals, competitions and conventions where programs are marketed to broadcasters and distributors. *Building Bombs* was awarded a Silver Hugo in the social/political documentary category at the 1989 Chi-

cago Film Festival.

"It's always been difficult to be an independent filmmaker," says Mori. "The U.S. is one of the worst places for independents. You can't get funding, and you can't get your films shown." Mori is on the steering committee of the National Coalition of Independent Producers, which successfully lobbied Congress to allocate \$6 million per year for independent television productions.

Robinson and Mori are not the only filmmakers pointing their cameras at the nuclear industry. But they believe their film is uniquely successful in capturing the rhythm of Southern life. "There's something very Southern about *Building Bombs*," says Robinson. "It meanders; it takes its time. Gradually, it tells viewers that the situation is an emergency."

Mori believes the slower pace of his hometown fostered his five-year dream of documenting life at the Savannah River Plant. "I couldn't have made *Building Bombs* if I lived in LA or New York," says Mori. "As first-time filmmakers, we probably would have been laughed out of town. The industry there is too overwhelming."

■ **Helen Shortall** is associate editor of *In Motion* magazine.

Mapfumo helps put Zimbabwe on map

By J. Poet

IN 1973 THOMAS MAPFUMO REVOLUTIONIZED Zimbabwe's pop music scene by recording a song for which he'd written his own music. Before Mapfumo, songs in the traditional style were always based on tunes that had been handed down for generations.

"Master mbira [thumb piano] players might improvise, but before me nobody would consciously try to write a new melody," Mapfumo said by phone from a hotel in North Carolina where his band, The Blacks Unlimited was preparing for the last gig of their first North American tour.

Mapfumo began composing songs in Shona, his tribal language, in 1965, but under white minority rule it was impossible to get them recorded—European pop ruled the airwaves.

"When I first played songs in Shona, people told me they weren't good enough. People judged songs by European standards—they didn't appreciate their own culture. But during the war of liberation people broke away from foreign music.

"Our own music became very militant during the liberation struggle. Bands started playing songs in Shona; people wanted to hear traditional music. They realized how powerful their own culture could be."

Musical subversion: Mapfumo's music—*chumerenga* (music of the people)—became very popular

during the civil war. When local radio played homegrown music, Mapfumo became Zimbabwe's leading singer-songwriter, but his popularity made the government unhappy. In 1977 he was charged with subversion and sent to a prison camp.

"The government said my songs were inflaming young men, making them leave the country and come back with guns to fight the government. This might have been true, but because they were ignorant of our

MUSIC

culture I convinced them that the songs were traditional, like a collection of proverbs put to a tune. Still, I was questioned for three months."

To obtain his release, Mapfumo agreed to perform a benefit for the ruling party, but at the concert he sang only his most revolutionary songs.

"They were angry," Mapfumo said laughing. "When they asked me why I played the same songs that got me in trouble, I said that I'd been in detention so I didn't have time to write new ones."

Mapfumo was born in 1945 in rural Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia). He grew up in the country, went to a British colonial school and worked as a herd boy, watching over the cattle.

"My grandfather played traditional music, but I taught myself by watching other kids play. You pride your-

self on your ability, so you go out and play with the other children, trying to outdo them."

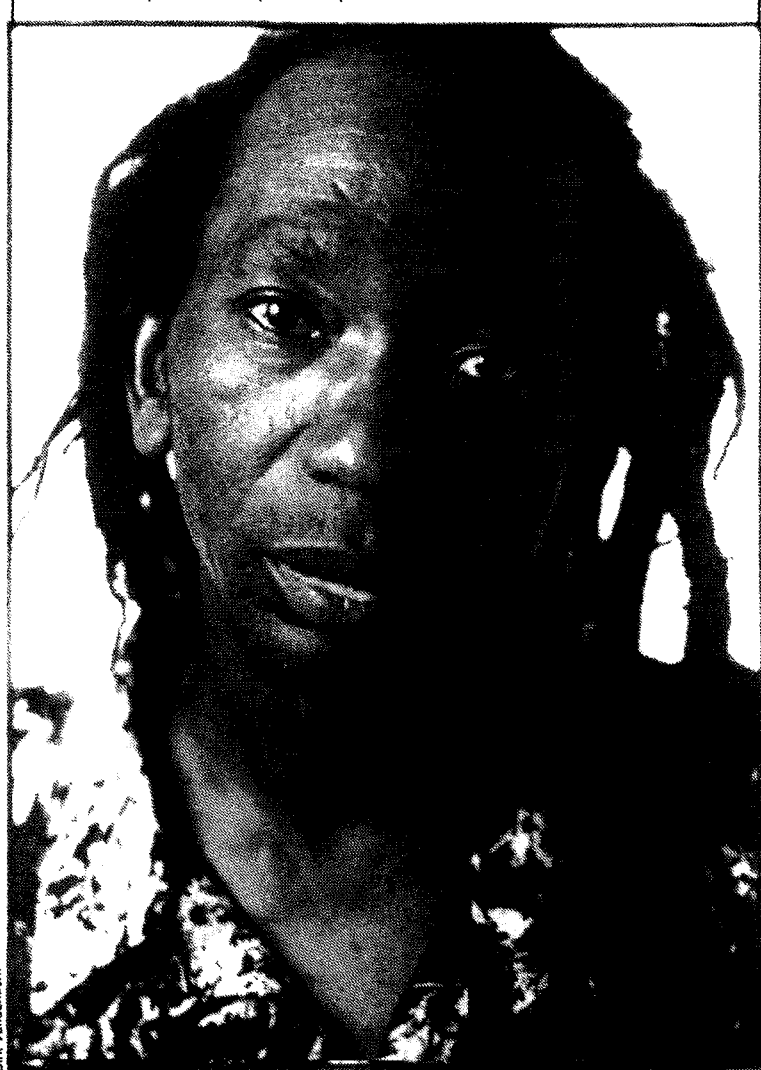
The American soul and British pop music of the '60s hit the black youth in Rhodesia just as hard as it hit kids in the U.S. After hearing the Beatles and Wilson Pickett, Mapfumo taught himself guitar and started the Hallelujah Chicken Run Band.

"We played in the big hotels and public bars. Africans like to drink

beer, so you could make a living in the beer halls. We would play pop music from African countries, some Beatles or Rolling Stones, funk, soul, a good variety of music. We also did some of the songs I wrote."

The Blacks Unlimited: Mapfumo left the Chicken Run Band to form The Acid Band. Their first album, *Hokoyo (Beware)*, contained the songs that led to Mapfumo's three-month detention.

Thomas Mapfumo: a hypnotically beautiful new album.



In 1978, after Zimbabwe won independence, Mapfumo formed The Blacks Unlimited and released *Gwindwe Rine Shumba (Lion in the Bush)*, a joyous celebration of his country's independence. And as the interest in world music grew, Mapfumo found himself becoming an international star. Jumbo Van Renen, of Earthworks Records, put out Mapfumo's albums in England and brought The Blacks Unlimited to London and Europe for several tours. Van Renen also introduced Mapfumo to Island Records, who signed the singer to an international contract.

Corruption, Mapfumo's first release for Mango, Island's world-music division, is an excellent introduction to Zimbabwe's traditional and urban music, embellished by other styles popular in Africa including soukous, township jive, reggae and the lilting soca beat of the title track. *Corruption* may not be instantly accessible to ears used to the verse/chorus structure of American pop, but after a few listens its hypnotic beauty will win you over.

Since *Corruption* is as strongly African as any of the recordings Mapfumo has made in the past, I asked him what he thought about African artists who used elements of Western music in an effort to gain a wider audience.

"When we heard the Beatles in Zimbabwe, we were ignorant of their culture, but we didn't ask them to change to our culture—we accepted [the music] for what it was. You might not understand my language, but music is music, and as long as you can dance to it, I don't see why we should change it."

■ **J. Poet** is a critic living in Berkeley, Calif.

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Panama

Continued from page 11

"public security force" to replace the disintegrated armed forces. In the end, the U.S. may withdraw completely—that is, from what used to be the Canal Zone as well—in 1999, as called for in the 1977 treaties. But the U.S. will want to make sure that a government in line with U.S. interests remains.

In the short term, the invasion has effectively ended whatever still lingered of the so-called "Vietnam syndrome," in Washington's view vindicating the buildup of forces during the Reagan era. A confident chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, Gen. Colin Powell, said on his visit to Panama: "I hope this operation has had an effect [on Congress], convincing them that over the last eight or nine years we have put together the best armed force in peacetime that this country has ever had. It's got quality, soldiers who are proud of what they do and with the American

people proud of them."

Ending the '80s with a bang seemed to cap the "Reagan doctrine." And now Latin America enters the '90s leery of whether a new "Bush doctrine" is emerging. The Bush administration's dispatch of warships to the Caribbean to "step up the war on drugs" off the Colombian coast so soon after the Panama intervention was hardly the way to reassure an uneasy region. Bogotá's negative reaction forced the administration to retreat somewhat from those plans.

Whether Manuel Noriega proves to have been the "big link" in the drug-smuggling chain, as President Bush claims, may perhaps be revealed in the deposed general's upcoming trial. Either way, drugs have replaced communism as the prime "enemy," with Panama affording a major boost to a revitalized U.S. military, whatever the invasion's long-term impact on the isthmus nation.

William Gasperini is on assignment in Panama.

Invasion myths

Continued from page 13

will encourage greater pluralism around the globe and the breakup of Cold War bloc politics.

Beyond the myths: If none of the publicly stated arguments put forth by the Bush administration and faithfully transmitted through the mass media is convincing, what, then, is the real basis of U.S. policy toward Manuel Noriega?

The key is to be found in the timing and context of U.S. opposition to Noriega. Washington's collaboration with the authoritarian, drug-dealing general ended in December 1985, when Noriega refused to cooperate fully with Reagan's policy of overthrowing the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. Until that time Noriega, with Washington's knowledge, had business and political relations with a broad array of conflicting forces: he sold arms to the contras and allowed the Sandinistas to

set up import houses for spare parts; he provided banking and trading opportunities for U.S. multinationals and the Cubans; he dealt with the Israeli arms merchants and Libyan purchasers; he turned over drug information to the DEA and allowed the transshipment of drugs from Colombia. He provided information to the CIA but opposed direct intervention in Nicaragua.

In recent years, Panama was Nicaragua's—and Cuba's—major intermediary for evading U.S. trade restrictions and gaining access to vital spare parts and essential but difficult to import goods. Nicaragua used Panama as a base for its official banking, maintaining most of its government funds there to avoid U.S. financial sanctions. Equally important, Nicaragua established a series of retail outlets linked to Panama for the import and sale of consumer items, earning more than \$100 million in hard currency.

Noriega benefited politically by his balancing act, and economically by skimming payoffs from all involved. But in 1985, when Washington attempted to mobilize all of its regional assets to impose a total economic blockade against Nicaragua and to build up its armed presence in Honduras in preparation for a possible invasion, Noriega refused to abandon his balancing act and follow the lead of the other Central American clients.

That's when the Reagan-Bush administration began to demonize Noriega, a process that culminated with the December invasion.

With the U.S. military in direct control of Panama and the obedient Endara regime in place, Washington is finally in a position to consummate its economic blockade of Nicaragua and to strengthen its stranglehold on the region. It will now also be easy to increase economic pressures on Cuba (which also engaged in vital trade and financial arrangements in Panama). The singlemindedness with which Washington pursued its efforts to overthrow Noriega, and the ends to which it went, testify to the singular importance that the Bush administration attaches to its policy of destroying the Sandinista government and to its lack of confidence in the electoral prospects of the united opposition in February.

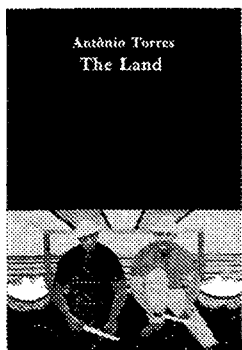
The reason for this is not hard to understand: the experiment with U.S.-promoted electoral regimes and free markets is coming apart throughout Latin America. The Argentine economy is collapsing, with triple-digit monthly inflation, Bolivian salaries and Manhattan prices. Similar problems are occurring in Brazil, Peru and Bolivia. As popular explosions become more frequent, the bankers, policy-makers and Latin American elites are beginning to promote the idea of a "return of the military." The last thing Washington can allow in the face of the impending collapse of the "free market" model is a popular nationalist regime based on freely contested elections.

This general context of deteriorating pro-U.S. regimes in the region strengthened Washington's obsession with overthrowing the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua and led it to unremitting opposition to Noriega. His only difference from the other currently backed U.S. military chieftains in the region plying the drug trade, repressing civilians and skimming public funds, was his unwillingness to join the economic blockade of Nicaragua and Cuba. The rest is a charade. Noriega will be duly tried and punished not for the crimes that he committed but for the commands he did not follow.

James Petras teaches sociology at the State University of New York, Binghamton.

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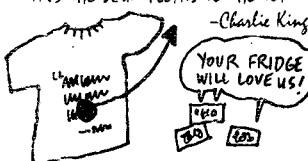
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SAN FRANCISCO March 3-4

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Bulgomanians make the transition to democracy

From the desk of Pete Karman

BULGOMANIA

Dear In These Times ideologistian:

We are high officials of Bulgomania, a Marxist-Leninist state that has rejected dictatorship and chosen democracy as its form of government. We looked ~~u~~ up democracy in our Funk & Wagnalls, and it said, "rule by the people." Since our country is already a "people's republic," is there anything we have to do differently from now on? In particular, will becoming a deomocracy prevent our small ruling clique from continuing to exercise ~~arbitrary~~ arbitrary power over the population? Will we still be able to exploit ~~max~~ workers, persecute ~~minorities~~ minorities and despoil the environment? What about our ability to set the ideology and control the culture in order to keep the public ignorant and acquiescent? We are worried that democracy will take away our prerogatives and leave the rabble in charge. We would therefore appreciate any advice you could give.

Signed,

Ivan Totalitaranski Tirranu Burocrato

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Dear high officials of Bulgomania,

Don't worry. Be happy. If you and your small clique play your cards right or extreme right, you'll be able to have your democracy and beat it, too. With luck and mass lobotomization, you'll be able to retain your undeserved power and privileges while keeping the proles in their place.

Here's some advice, based on our experience in America, on the points you enumerated.

To retain arbitrary power, divide your small ruling clique into two political parties. Make all your important decisions in private while the politicians of the two parties debate nonsense in public. Have lots of elections but few voters. You got this one badly wrong in your Marxist-Leninist days when you forced 99.99 percent of the people to vote for your one party. When things went wrong, they had only you to blame. It's far better to have two parties with only 50 percent of the people voting. That way the ruling party needs only 26 percent support while the other 74 percent have only themselves to blame for your misrule.

You'll find it's easier to exploit workers if you stop telling them they live in a workers' state. Some of them have an unfortunate tendency to take you at your word. Tell them instead that bosses and workers are free and equal under the law—the former to move their factories to Bangladesh, and the latter to apply for jobs in Bangladesh paying a cup of gruel a week and a new loincloth as a yearly bonus.

You couldn't have come to a better place when you ask about being able to keep on persecuting minorities. My own country was one of the last on Earth to give up, with some reluctance, the practice of human slavery. Until just a generation ago, we legally segregated our citizens by race and, in many areas of our society, we still do so by custom. That hasn't stopped us from incessantly proclaiming ourselves to be the global exemplar of freedom as well as democracy. In this regard you may also wish to study the cases of South Africa and Israel, successful parliamentary democracies in which three-quarters of the population of the former and one-third of the population of the latter have no rights whatsoever.

Your ongoing option to despoil the environment is, I'm sorry to report, more problematic. In your halcyon totalitarian days, you were able to repress environmentalists as reactionary counterrevolutionaries opposed to the advancement of the socialist state. As you move into the Western camp, however, you will have to accommodate to the specter of Walt Disney. His films and theme parks, while commendably profitable, have the unfortunate side effect of making small animals lovable and therefore deserving of protection. This in turn has led to concern for the broader natural ecology and, as unfortunately, a sappy and subversive regard for things in life beyond

the cash nexus, which tends to undermine our free-market system.

I know you may not understand this in your part of Europe, where the tendency, driven by both cultural and economic imperatives, is to quickly kill, skin, roast and eat anything in the outdoors that hops, scurries or pecks. But since you soon will be importing a lot of Walt Disney as part of our Democratization Package, your country will no doubt contract this side effect. We find that it is best to roll with the punches on this issue. Sometimes you have to save part of the environment in order to be free to despoil the rest.

As I see it, your ideological and cultural problems are likely to be the most difficult to get a velvet glove on. Here in America we have a practical and stabilizing ideology that sedates the populace with the endless message that ignorance is bliss and all's for the best on our island of virtue in an otherwise evil and chaotic world. We are particularly good at making the important trivial and the trivial important. You have no doubt noticed how in recent days we have swelled with national pride at our success at removing one of our own minor CIA operatives in our very small satrapy of Panama by expending billions of dollars, deploying thousands of troops and wasting hundreds of innocent lives.

By contrast, you Bulgomanians have only begun to recover from the infection of Marxism, a way of thinking that seeks to make sense of history by connecting and giving proportion to events. You've got a few too many idealists in your country who have spent their time in dreary cafeterias reading books and making politics informed by this subversive ideology. Right now you seem to have an abundance of them in their beards and sweaters talking on television about building humane and just societies. Thus your transition from Karl Marx to K mart is likely to be a long and arduous one. It takes time for nations to dumb down and buy in.

However, I'm confident that by mindlessly aping America and aggressively snubbing the Swedes, your ruling clique and the others now moving away from communism can make it if you try. As my parting advice, I ask you to bear in mind that democracy is a lot like Christianity. People generally are equally as horrified by hearing it doubted as seeing it practiced.

Signed,

Pete Karman
Under-Assistant
Ideologistian